

Gunmen kill judge during court session

GUNMEN have shot dead the presiding President of Ejemekwuru Customary Court in the Oguta Local Government Area of Imo State, Nnaemeka Ugboma.

The gunmen ambushed the court president, dragged him out of the court room while the Court was in session and shot him dead at a close range.

The Nation gathered that the gunmen, who came on motorbikes, shot sporadically as the people fled the scene.

The killing of the jurist resulted in a pandemonium as litigants, court staff and even residents fled in different directions.

A source said the slain magistrate was a law graduate of the 1991 set and hailed from Nnebukwu community in the Oguta Local Government Area of the state.

"He was killed while presiding over a court session by some gunmen who operated on motorcycles. Nobody knew they were killers," the source said.

Another witness said: "The jurist was killed in his court while sitting. His killers came with

Chris Njoku, Owerri

motorcycles. They came into the court, dragged him out, shot him dead and drove off.

"His corpse was there as people in court fled. The whole thing is confusing because nobody knew any reason they killed him.

"He was from Nnebukwu community in Oguta LGA."

President of Customary Court, Ihiagwa, Emperor Iwuala who confirmed the killing to The Nation correspondent yesterday, wrote: "My learned brother, His Worship Nnaemeka Ugboma, Chairman of the Customary Court Ejemekwuru, Oguta LGA, Imo State, was shot dead yesterday (Thursday) in court by yet-to-be identified persons. We are indeed in perilous times.

"We have vowed not to sit until the whole issue is resolved."

When contacted, the chairman of Owerri Branch of the Nigerian Bar Association, Ugochukwu Allinor, who confirmed the

incident, described the event as "an unfortunate situation."

He said: "It is an unfortunate situation. A jurist that is carrying out his legitimate duty would just be mowed down in broad daylight brazenly and the person will just work away like that. It then means nobody is safe.

"We totally condemn it. It is never heard of, and if we continue like this, we are heading to anarchy where a sitting jurist is attacked in his court and brought down. There is problem."

The spokesperson for the Police in the state, Henry Okoye, said: "On 02/02/2023, at about 1245hrs, about five armed gunmen stormed Ejemekuru Customary Court in Oguta LGA of Imo State, shot the customary court president, Nnemeka Ugboma 'm' from Oguta LGA and dumped his corpse at the back of the court building. Corpse has been recovered and deposited at the mortuary.

"Investigation is ongoing. Tactical teams have been deployed to the area to track down the assailants, apprehend them and brought to face the full wrath of the law."