

Family raises posers on death of woman, man inside hotel room

DAPO FALADE - PORT HARCOURT

THE last is yet to be heard about the circumstances surrounding the death of Mrs Ebiegberi Ejor, wife of a chieftain of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in Rivers State, who was found dead naked in company of a man in a hotel room in Port Harcourt, on July 6, 2015.

The late Mrs Ejor (Nee Amungo) was, until her mysterious death, the wife of Chief Ejo Ngowa Ejor, chairman of Eleme Local Government Area between 2004 and 2007.

Initial report had it that the deceased was abducted but an autopsy report the Rivers State Police Command obtained from the University of Port Teaching Hospital (UPTH) indicated that she and her male companion, Freedom Harrison, were electrocuted while taking their bath in the hotel room.

Mrs Ejor and Harrison were both said to have been found naked on the floor in an embrace position with the shower in-between their bodies at the entrance of the shower cubicle (a jacuzzi bath), while the policemen who went there took pictures of the deceased, their clothes and other evidence in the hotel room.

The family of the deceased, the Amungos of the Adubabiri Compound in Southern Ijaw Local Government Area of Bayelsa State, however rejected the result of an autopsy conducted on her, saying it was not acceptable to them.

The family of Mrs Ejor, in a press statement issued in Port Harcourt, on Friday, also called on the Inspector General of Police, Mr Solomon Arase, to conduct a fresh investigation and unravel the circumstances leading to the death of their daughter.

Elder brother of the deceased, Dr Ebimo Amungo, in the statement, specifically wanted the IGP to appoint a seasoned police officer to conduct the investigation.

He said the family had lost faith in the ability of the Rivers Police Command to find the true and probable cause of the death of their daughter, who they believed was murdered with her business partner, Harrison, a Rivers State indigene but naturalised French.

Dr Amungo said the claim by the police that she was found dead in a hotel room in Port Harcourt with Harrison "is contrary to news that had been released to the public that she was abducted by kidnappers and murdered by political opponents of her husband, Chief Ejo Ngowa Ejor."

He said the police claimed that on July 6, 2015, the manager of a hotel at Agip Estate, Port Harcourt and owned by a serving lawmaker in the state House of Assembly, reported to the Ada George Road Police Division, Port Harcourt of the discovery of two dead persons in one of the hotel's rooms.

"The recently appointed Commissioner of Police of the Rivers State Police Command, Mr Chris Ezike, went personally to Chief Ejor's residence to inform him of his wife's death on the evening of 6th of July", Dr Amungo said.

He added that, much later, two persons were sent to the hotel room to confirm the identities of the deceased and one was a close aide of the deceased's husband, Mr Tonye Cookey-Gam and the other was Mrs. Ejor's mother.

"Later on, the policemen evacuated the corpses to UPTH where their bodies were embalmed. The next day, July 7, 2015, the Commissioner of Police secured a magistrate's order for an autopsy to be conducted on Mrs Ejor and this was carried out on Wednesday, July 8, 2015 at UPTH by one Dr Obiorah.

"Mr Cookey-Gam witnessed for the deceased's husband, while a younger brother of the deceased, Mr Woyinkuro Amungo, represented the Amungo family and the result of the autopsy was that Mrs Ejor died by electrocution", he added.

He said the autopsy result was unacceptable to the Amungo family and rather contended that "both Mrs Ejor and Mr Harrison were murdered and their bodies planted were in the hotel room in a manner to create the impression that they were electrocuted while having a bath.

"The theory of electrocution while having a bath is spurious and hard to believe, especially with evidence at the scene and, crucially, evidence on the photographs supplied by the police.

"The whole basis of the police investigation so far is directed towards only one conclusion — which is that both deceased were electrocuted while having a bath in the shower?", he said.

Dr Amungo accused the investigating police officers of "directing the pathologist who conducted the autopsy on Mrs Ejor towards the same conclusion, despite clear signs of torture on the body of the deceased.

"There were lots of inconsistencies in the pictures pro-



The late Mrs Ebiegberi Ejor

Another question is, why the investigating police officers did not investigate the deceased's phone calls for evidence of her whereabouts at various times by using simple location pointers available at the telecoms providers

vided by the police of the deceased at the scene where she was discovered," he said.

The Amungo family also queried the failure of the police to secure and cordon off the hotel for further investigation but allowed the owners of the hotel to open the room for business the very next day after the two corpses were evacuated from it.

They also wondered why the police officers quickly returned crucial items such as her car, her phone and clothes to her husband on the same day her corpse was discovered

in the hotel, pointing out that these could have given several leads to the real cause of Mrs Ejor's death.

"Another question is, why the investigating police officers did not investigate the deceased's phone calls for evidence of her whereabouts at various times by using simple location pointers available at the telecoms providers", the statement read.

"It is on these bases that her family is urging the IGP to appoint a seasoned police officer from outside the Rivers State Police Command to investigate the death of Mrs Ejor and Mr Harrison," the statement added.

The family also wanted another autopsy to be conducted on the deceased while the IGP should direct the police to investigate the death of the duo and apprehend those responsible for their demise.

Rivers State Police Public Relations Officer, DSP Ahmad Mohammad, could not be reached but his second-in-command, ASP Grace Iringe-Koko, said it was only the commissioner of police that could talk on the matter.

Also, the Rivers police boss could not be reached at the time of filing this report but he was said to have spoken in a recent radio interview in Port Harcourt, that he would not comment on the death of Mrs Ejor because it was a family matter which should not be discussed in the public due to the trauma the family was undergoing