

## Feature

# My husband was killed like a goat on his farm in Kwara, woman cries out

Biola Azeez | Ilorin

**M**R Ibrahim Ajayi, a native of Ogidi in Ijumu Local Government Area of Kogi State, retired from the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) three years ago and chose to pursue agriculture which was said to have always been his passion.

Ajayi, 65, decided to buy a large tract of land in his native community, Ogidi, and poured all his passion into it. However, because of so many unanticipated factors, the returns were not as expected. About six months ago, he moved out of Ogidi. He bought about eight hectares of land at Oke-Oyi community, near Ilorin, the Kwara State capital and restarted his farming there.

On Friday, December 13, 2019, at about 5.00 p.m., Ajayi was hacked down on his farm in a most gruesome way. He was macheted "like when one kills a goat".

Wife of the deceased, Mrs Ibrahim, who works in Abuja, narrated her ordeal and appealed to the police authorities to allow justice prevail.

"He called me every morning around 5 o'clock. When I didn't see his call on that day, I was worried, thinking he probably didn't charge his phone. When it was around 6.30 a.m., I called him but none of the lines was going through. At about 7.00 a.m., I succeeded with one of his lines and the person who picked the call asked what I was to the owner of the line. I said I was his wife. The person said he was a police officer and that he was speaking from a police station. He said my husband had an accident. I called him back and that was when he said I should come to the police station at Oke-Oyi in Ilorin. I was already shaking. I called my husband's brother in Ilorin but he said he had yet to know what was going on because he was just called, too. He told me my husband's car was still parked where it was but he had not seen his brother.

"However, people had already started calling to commiserate with me while on the bus on my way from Abuja to Ilorin. I said to myself, 'my husband is not dead but why the condolences?' By the time I got to Ilorin, it was about 8.00 p.m. I called the police officer that I was already in Ilorin, but he said I should come the next day since it was already late. Around 9.00 p.m., my husband's brother called me to say that my husband's phone was found on his Oke-Oyi farm where he was macheted.

"I started crying upon the reality that had just dawned on me. When we got to the police station the following morning, I was shown a picture of my husband. He was killed like when one kills a goat. I was shown the assailant, too. I saw him in handcuffs on his legs and arms. I asked him why he killed my husband, and he said he wouldn't have killed him intentionally. He said he was under a spell (eedi). He said my husband was nice to him, took care of him and promised



The deceased Ajayi

to buy him a car but he didn't know how it happened. He told me that he committed the offence but didn't know what came over him. I was shivering and couldn't bear to hear anything from him again. He was taken back into the cell by the police. They thought I would fight him because I was so dejected.

"My husband's corpse had been taken to mortuary. We asked for its release but police said they wanted to carry out autopsy. It was eventually released to us on Monday evening for burial, being a Muslim. The police told us they would have to investigate the matter.

"My husband's killing was cruel and wicked. The attacker has made his three children fatherless and I'm now a widow.



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The death has also brought untold misery to many homes. There are those on his scholarship. There are graduates among them; there are many aged that he was taking care of. He took good care of me as well as his children's education and well-being. In fact, it is a great vacuum. Many people have expressed sorrow over his demise. He took care of his workers. This man that killed him was his assistant on the farm. He trusted him so much.

"I appeal to the police authorities in the state to help me carry out all investigation needed on death of my husband and bring the culprit to book so that justice will prevail in order to deter others from doing such in future. This is a case of murder. This man must be prosecuted because he deliberately committed the crime," she said.

Also sharing his pain and loss on the death of Ajayi, his childhood friend and a former national president of Ogidi Development Union (name withheld), described the deceased as a trustworthy and dutiful personality.

"I have just returned from the village where I went to bury my close childhood friend. His was a most painful death. Ibrahim Ajayi and I were pals right from primary school. Although he did not go beyond secondary school, fortune smiled on him. He joined the NNPC and rose steadily through the ranks.

"When I became National President of Ogidi Development Union in 2006, at a most turbulent period in our community, I needed a trusted ally to head the all-important Abuja branch. He took the job and exceeded all expectations.

"The suspect picked up by the police is a man from that community with whom he had developed a close relationship. He was always going in and out with the man. In fact, on the day of the murder, they were together and had lunch together before my friend was savagely axed to death at about 5pm.

"When the police searched the suspect's house, they found my friend's phone, blood-stained clothes and other personal effects. He is said to have confessed to having killed my friend," he said.

Speaking with *Saturday Tribune* on the development, the Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Kwara State command, Ajayi Okesanmi, while confirming the incident, said investigation was on to unravel the motives behind the murder.

Okesanmi said: "I learnt he went to the farm with his friend on the fateful day and an argument ensued. It was gathered that there was a scuffle and the deceased was overpowered by his so-called friend. And the assailant hacked the man to death. We're still investigating to know the cause of the action because the man kept saying it was like a spell cast on him. We're going on with our investigation to know the motive behind the action."

It was also alleged that the attacker, identified simply as Waheed, a man in his mid-40s and a native of Oke-Oyi, lured the deceased to the farm with intention to kill him but told the deceased that he wanted to confirm a bullet-proof or local charm he had made on the deceased.

As family and friends of the deceased await the outcome of police investigation on the murder of their loved one, they believe that justice would be done by the police.