

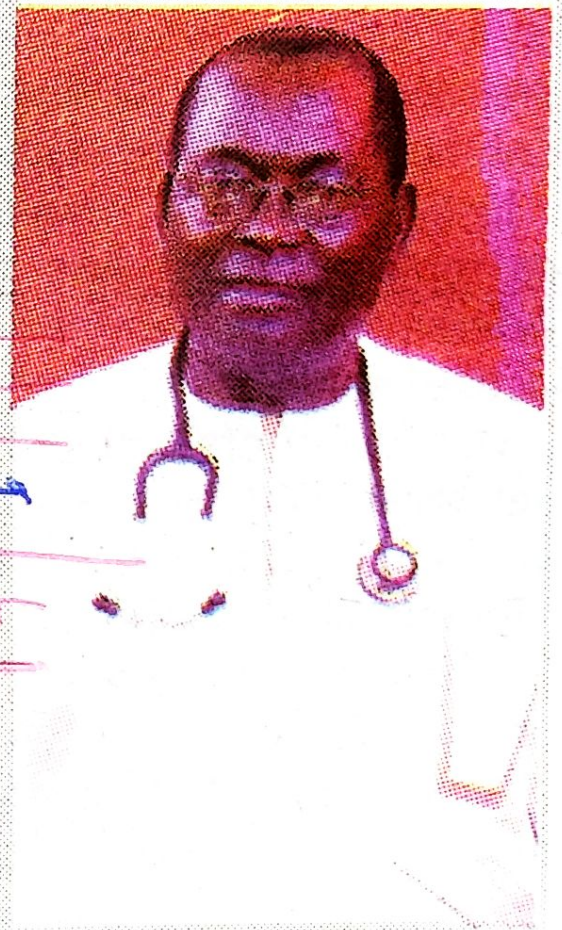
Anger trails killing of Dora Akunyili's husband by gunmen in Anambra

- Buhari, Senate, Ohanaeze, others mourn
- South-East govs condemn killing
- Anambra gov places N20m bounty on killers
- South East under siege —Ebonyi gov, Ohanaeze
- IPOB denies involvement, says killing politically motivated

From 'Suyi Ayodele, South-East Bureau Chief; Grace Egbo, Michael Ovat, Johnkennedy Uzoma, Leon Usigbe and Tijani Adeyemi

THERE was anger across the country on Wednesday following the killing of Dr Chike Akunyili, widower of the late Professor Dora Akunyili, in Anambra State on Tuesday afternoon by unidentified gunmen, with several individuals and groups condemning what they described as "barbaric killing."

The Igbo socio-cultural group, Ohanaeze Ndigbo Worldwide, in a statement, described the killing as "atrocious, horrendous, unacceptable and barbaric."



CONTINUES ON PAGE 4 Dr Chike Akunyili

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Senate holds one-minute silence to honour deceased, Buhari mourns
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Secretary of the group, Ikechukwu Isiguzoro, in a statement, condemned "the ethnic cleansing and extrajudicial killings in the South-East, especially in Anambra.

He then called on the Anambra State governor, Willie Obiano, to ensure that perpetrators of the crime were arrested and made to face the consequences of their actions.

Also reacting, the Coalition of South East Youth Leaders (COSEYL), the umbrella body of all the youth groups in the South-East geopolitical zone, described the killing of Dr Akunyili and others as wickedness of the highest order.

In a statement endorsed by its President General, Goodluck Egwu Ibem, issued on Wednesday in Owerri, Imo State, the coalition condemned in the strongest terms the assassination of the renowned medical practitioner.

The Senate, at the plenary on Wednesday, observed a minute silence in honour of Dr Akunyili.

The minute silence followed matter of urgent public importance bought by Senator Uche Ekwunife, who said the deceased was the medical director of St Luke Hospital, Enugu and

had contributed to the development of health care in Nigeria.

Senate President, Ahmad Lawan, in his comment, said there was no debate on the motion as it was brought under order 43 of the Senate rule.

The Senate, thereafter, observed the minute silence in honour of the deceased.

Meanwhile, President Muhammadu Buhari has said that he is deeply saddened by the gruesome killing of Dr Akunyili.

A statement issued by Femi Adesina, Special Adviser to the President (Media and Publicity) on Wednesday said the president shared the pain of the families and friends, whose lives will never remain the same after the inhuman and reprehensible act.

However, following the killings recorded in Anambra State within a few days, Governor Willie Obiano has pledged N20 million reward to any resident with useful information about the gunmen.

Obiano pledged the offer when he met with all the security agencies in the state, in Awka, on Wednesday.

He said: "Since last weekend, some armed persons have unleashed terror with sporadic attacks on inno-

cent citizens in various parts of the state.

"From the briefings I have received from security commanders, offices of some political parties, branded campaign vehicles and individuals occupying them have been attacked, with killings and burning of vehicles observed.

"Other innocent road users have become victims of this menace with many losing their lives and others, their properties," he said.

The governor noted that between Sunday and Tuesday, attacks on citizens at Oko, Agulu, Obosi, Nkpor, Nnobi, Nnewi and other places had left about 10 people dead, including Dr Akunyili.

Governor Obiano called on traditional rulers, presidents-general, clergy men, vigilance groups and all leadership structures to take responsibility and in conjunction with all security agencies, work to restore order immediately.

Also, the South East Governors Forum on Wednesday condemned the killing of Dr Akunyili.

Chairman of the Forum and Governor of Ebonyi State, Chief David Umahi, described the incident wicked and barbaric.

In a statement signed by his Special Assistant on Media and Publicity, Francis

Nwaze, the governor appealed to security agencies to ensure the perpetrators of the criminal act are brought to book.

"The governors while expressing concern over how Ndigbo is now losing most of its finest to hoodlums in the zone commiserated with the people of Agulu, the Anambra State government, and Ndigbo on the unfortunate event of the murder of the elder statesman.

"They appealed to security agencies to rise to the occasion and arrest all perpetrators of the dastardly act to enable them to face justice."

Meanwhile, the Commissioner of Police in the state, Tony Olofu, has vowed that the command, in collaboration with other security agencies, would deal with the killers of Dr Akunyili.

The police commissioner, who spoke while confirming Akunyili's death, sued for calm and stressed that the perpetrators would be unmasked and "decisively dealt with."

A statement issued by the Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO) in the state, Tochukwu Ikenga, on Wednesday in Awka, said that Olofu visited the scene where Akunyili was killed in Nkpor and two other locations where violent crimes

were perpetrated.

Ikenga quoted Olofu as saying that with the way they operated, the gunmen seemed to have lost every iota of human conscience and sensibility in them.

Nigerian Tribune gathered that Dr Akunyili was killed at Umuoji, in Idemili North Local Government Area of Anambra State, where he had gone to receive the honour conferred on his late wife, Dora, by the University of Nigeria, Nsukka Alumni Association (UNAA).

A source who was at the venue of the award ceremony said the event took place at the Sharon Hall, All Saints Cathedral, Onitsha, where Dr Akunyili had made a donation of N500,000.

The deceased, it was further gathered, attended the ceremony in company with his son, Obum, with the source claiming that the older Akunyili was shot in the presence of his son.

"He spoke glowingly about Dora, his wife and made a donation of N500,000 to the association. He was there with his son, Obum, who now works with the Anambra State government. We saw them off to the car and it was emotional when Obum hugged him (Chike) tight as both of them separated to

join their respective vehicles.

"Obum was in a white Hilux while the man was in a Prado Jeep," the source added.

Another source, a member of the deceased's community, identified as John Bosco, said: "He lost his life at Nkpor Junction, Idemili North Local Government Area of Anambra State on Tuesday. Agbalanze (his traditional title) was killed by gunmen. May the Lord console the Akunyili family and Ndi Agulu in general."

In the video of the killing, which has gone viral, Dr Akunyili, in a complete suit with white shirt and a black tie, was shot in the left eye and was seen trying to get up from the pool of his blood.

Another person, in a brown native dress, with a brown shoe to match, was also seen in the pool of his own blood.

Denying involvement of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) in the killings, its spokesman, Emma Powerful, said IPOB is not 'unknown gunmen', adding that the group had no intention of fomenting trouble in the region.

In an interview with **Nigerian Tribune** on Wednesday, Powerful warned those linking IPOB to unknown gunmen to desist.