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Royal Father killed

CHUKWUEMEKA IKE



... After political meeting in Imo
•Victim of police bullet

In a rare move, the Imo State Police Command has admitted that the traditional ruler of Umunakanu Ezeala in Ehime Mbano Local Government, Eze Emeka Njoku who was found dead in the early hours of November 22 was a victim of a bullet from men of his Command.

Police Commissioner of Imo State, Assistant Inspector General of Police, AIG Aloysius Okorie speaking on the incident said that the Divisional Police Officer, DPO in charge of Owerri Urban Police station sent a patrol team of four policemen to the scene after they received a distress short message at about 0130hours that armed robbers were operating along Okikpe street, off Amanze Njoku, Aladinma in Owerri.

According to AIG Okorie, "the team used an unmarked bus with three men in uniform and one in mufti. When my men were unable to locate the exact area the robbers were operating, they drove down to Aladinma Police Station where an officer on mufti was assigned to them, as a back-up. Later, they sighted two vehicles, one Honda car and a jeep coming in their direction at full speed." The police boss said the activities of the robbers showed suspicion, when their two vehicles were flagged down and they slowed down, but refused to stop. Consequently, the two mobile policemen in the back up jeep sensed the men in the vehicles could be hardened criminals. To avert apprehension, the robbers shot at the patrol team's cars.

National Daily gathered that the police responded for self-defence, but it was later discovered that the Honda car was driven by Eze Njoku, backed up by the jeep and two mobile policemen. Okorie further said the two vehicles went in different directions, only for the police to realise the following day that the Honda car was parked close to Aladinma Royal Palace, where Eze eventually slumped on the steering.

Regrettably, he said : "Eze was confirmed dead when brought to the Federal medical Centre (FMC) Owerri. Apparently the Eze with bullet injury tried to escape from the scene, but his car lost control and hit a tree around 0230 am to about 0600am. There were bullet marks on the car and injury on Eze. We gathered the late traditional ruler was way-back home after a political meeting in the residence of a prominent Mbano politician Chief Tony Chukwu, in company of two mobile policemen as escorts to a construction company based in Owerri-Vitel construction company Nigeria Limited, when the bad omen happened."

This newly-elevated AIG now posted to Zone 4 denied that the late Eze Njoku was assassinated, rather, he said all the policemen involved in the incident are under detention and full investigation has commenced to unravel the complicity as well as establish from whose side the bullet that hit the royal father came from.

Okorie condemned the demonstration of the Umunakanu Ezeala community over the murder of their traditional ruler describing it as un- called for and advised parents to restrain their wards from being used to cause a break down of law and order.

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The Late royal father, fondly called 'Emzor' is the owner of one of the popular fast-food eateries in Owerri called Trendy and a chain of Mobil Petrol filling stations along Egbu, Orij, and Okigwe road in Owerri.

The murder of Njoku has raised fear of insecurity in Imo as no fewer than three prominent politicians have been killed in the State in less than one month, while some others narrowly escaped the assassins' bullets.

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