

# metro

... City, Crime, Courts

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## Family alleges cover-up in of three siblings

Simon Utebor and  
Etim Ekpimah

The family of Essien Akpabio of Mente in Ini Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State, has accused the police of shielding the killers of its three male members.

PUNCH Metro gathered that Charles, Emmanuel and Joseph were allegedly murdered on April 25, 2012.

They were said to have been killed in the presence of their aged mother, Mrs. Etim Akpabio, by yet-to-be-identified security personnel, who claimed they (deceased) were armed robbers.

The trio were also said to have been murdered shortly after they had a meeting with officials of a construction firm about to commence the construction of a dam in the village.

It was also gathered that the three persons, who were youths' leaders in the village, were slain by security operatives allegedly working for a top politician.

PUNCH Metro further learnt that the Akpabios owned more than 80 per cent of the land in which the dam was to be constructed.

But the family, who

insisted that the deceased were not armed robbers, said they found the claim by the police curious.

They said a discrete investigation should be carried out to ascertain the true identities of the deceased.

Addressing a news conference in Lagos recently, the founder, Liberty Foundation Gospel Ministry and the elder sister of the slain persons, Helen Akpabio, accused the police and the State Security Service of being responsible for their deaths.

Relating how the three were murdered, she said other members of the Akpabio family were no longer safe.

"I have never seen such a thing before-three corpses from one family in one day? Even if they had something against them, they should have taken them to the court for them to defend themselves," Akpabio said.

The cleric, who wept profusely during the conference, said she was on behalf of her family, calling on all people of conscience to come to their aid and ensure that the murderers of her siblings were brought to



justice.

Akpabio said, "My brothers did not know they were in the bad book of the SSS and the police who used their bosom friend to entrap them."

"The friend had lured them into having a meeting with a construction company to discuss the dam project as the youths' input was needed. But halfway into

the meeting, the security personnel swooped on them. They were handcuffed, beaten and eventually killed."

She alleged that the security team still had one of the corpses, which it had refused to release to the family for burial.

She called on President Goodluck Jonathan and

other authorities concerned to order the recovery of Emmanuel's body which was allegedly taken to Obot Akara Police Station, for a decent burial.

She also urged that security should be beefed up around the Akpabio family as "the killer squad will do everything possible to conceal any evidence of

eyewitness in respect of the dastardly murder."

The lawyer to the family, Mr. Victor Ukutt, said when they went to the Obodo Nkara Police Division to report the incident, the police authorities insisted that the deceased were armed robbers.

The lawyer said the corpse of one of the deceased was

## Pictures of slain banker's corpse admitted as evidence

Eniola Akinkuotu

An Ikeja High Court on Wednesday admitted as evidence, pictures of the corpse of Tifiboo (Omaroia).

on the borders of the pictures did not emanate from the negatives and as such the pictures were not credible.

"I want it to be seen that these photographs

## Gridlock as bridge

Ozioma Ubabukoh,  
Enugu

Heavy traffic has built up in Enugu State following the collapse of the bridge.

shook. This whole thing happened within two minutes and I was just approaching the tip of the bridge.

"When the tremor

and we made a swift reverse. This caused traffic snarls that night, which lasted in Abakpa-Nike and Trans-Ekulu till about midnight."

The police on Thursday arraigned six persons - Chukwumemeka Eze (31), Henry Nnaji (27), Jonathan Nnanna (30), Michael Antsum, (37), Clement Agba (24) and Henry Chinedu (27) - before an Igboere Magistrate's Court, Lagos, for allegedly vandalising street lights.

The police said the accused

## Six arraigned for vandalising streetlights

Temitayo Famutimi

maliciously damaged the street lights located along Marwa Beach, Lekki Phase 1 area of Lagos and stole 48 pieces of harbin coslight storage batteries and eight pieces of monolite batteries valued at N2m.

They allegedly carried out the offence on June 3 at about 1am.

They were charged with three counts of conspiracy to commit felony, stealing and malicious damage contrary to and punishable under sections 409, 388 and 285(5) of the Criminal Laws of Lagos

State 2011.

However, when the charges were read to them, they all pleaded not guilty to the three charges.

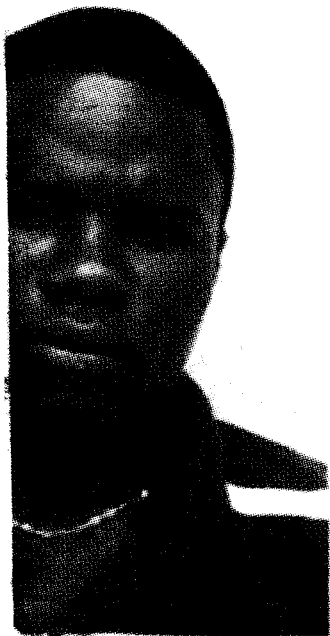
Magistrate O. A. Ogunbowale admitted all the defendants to bail in

the sum of N500,000 with two sureties in like sum.

She said the sureties must be the blood relations, who must show evidence of tax payments to the state government.

The case was adjourned till June 21 for further hearing.

# murder



wisdom of the mortuary attendants, the security operatives would have succeeded.

He therefore called on the relevant authorities to investigate the incident and bring the killers to book.

He said the matter had already been reported to the Presidency, the Senate, the SSS and to the House of Representatives Committee on Public Petitions.

But when contacted, the Police Relations Officer, Akwa Ibom State Command, Mr. Etim Dickson, said he was in Cross River State when the incident happened and was therefore not competent to comment on the matter.

"I was not around at the time the incident took place. I was in Calabar then and so would not be able to comment on the matter," he told one of our correspondents.

taken away by the police.

"We went back to the mortuary but the mortuary attendant said the police had come to take away the corpse. We went back to the DPO and insisted they give us the corpse. The DPO said the order not to release the corpse was from above," Ukutt said.

He said if not for the

## Woman accuses Ondo monarch of attempted rape

Sunday Aborisade, Akure

A woman, Mrs. Comfort Awogbamila, had in a statement read in court alleged that Olusupare of Supare-Akoko, Oba Adedeji Adejoro, attempted to rape her.

The statement was read on Thursday before a Chief Magistrate's Court by policeman, Mr. Ewarawon Fayowole.

This followed a request by Awogbamila's lawyer, Mr. Duro Adonis that the court should ask the policeman to read his client's statement made to the police.

Awogbamila said the monarch attempted to rape her at his residence in Supare

town, Akoko South West Local Government Area of Ondo State.

Fayowole also told the court that the monarch's wife, Sherifat, had engaged Awogbamila in a public brawl on two occasions within a week.

Sherifat is currently facing two counts of engaging in an act capable of causing a breach of public peace.

The police charged the queen and Awogbamila to court on May 7.

The charge preferred against the two accused had read in part: "That you Comfort Awogbami

and Olori Sherifat Adedeji on 4th of May, 2012 at about 8pm at Supare Magisterial district unlawfully involved yourself in fighting in a public at Ugbe quarters Supare Akoko and thereby committed an offence contrary to Section 83 of the Criminal Code cap 37 vol ii, laws of Ondo State"

The accused were also charged with conduct likely to cause breach of peace contrary and punishable under Section 249(d) of the criminal code cap 37 Vol 11 laws of the state.

However, when the case came up for hearing on Thursday, the Investigating Police Officer, Fayowole, told the court that the fight between the women caused uproar in the town on May 4.

The IPO tendered Awogbamila's statement where she alleged that the monarch invited her to his house and attempted to rape her.

However, Adonis, accused the police of preferring wrong charges against his client, saying that her statement ought to have been read in court.

The police prosecutor, Mr. Steven Dickson, and the magistrate disagreed with Adonis.

But Adonis argued that reading the statement would establish that the police ought to have included attempted rape in the charge sheet.

The court then agreed that the statement should be read in open court. However, as the statement was read, the court ordered Adonis to just study it and ask his questions.

Part of the statement read in court stated that the monarch and his wife fought with Awogbamila resulting in her being admitted to the Federal Medical Centre, Owo.

The statement added that the monarch sent one of her daughters, to invite Awogbamila to his house over the fight between her and his wife on April 28.

According to the statement, Awogbamila in the statement further alleged that after the monarch had excused others, he took her to a private room and attempted to rape her.

She alleged that although she escaped, the monarch tore her clothes.

Awogbamila said the monarch's wife later joined her husband in beating her until people came to rescue her.

The court fixed further hearing to June 26.

## Another drug trafficker arrested in Port Harcourt

Chukwudi Akasike, Port Harcourt

Barely one week after the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency paraded a suspected drug trafficker, operatives of the

agency have arrested another suspect at the Port Harcourt International Airport.

The suspect, Mrs. Yusuf Rabiat Olabisi, was arrested around 9pm on May 31, 2012, while attempting to travel to London after ingesting 70 wraps of cocaine weighing

1.016 kilogrammes and valued at N15m.

Olabisi, a 56-year-old mother of six, was said to have excreted the wraps of cocaine under the close watch of the NDLEA operatives at the airport.

It was gathered that the

suspect, who was promised three thousand pounds (N738,000) to deliver the drug to a client in London, had already received one thousand pounds as advance payment.

Olabisi was expected to collect her two thousand pounds balance as soon as she delivers the drugs.

However, the suspect refused to speak with journalists.

The NDLEA Commander at the airport, Mr. Olutokunbo Davies, said it was the second time the agency would be arresting suspected drug peddlers at the airport in less than two weeks.

Davies expressed sadness that women were mostly involved in drug trafficking in recent times, saying, "Women who are supposed to be revered as mothers of the nation have decided not only to soil the good image of motherhood, but hell-bent on dragging the image of the country through the mud."

"NDLEA is very much ready to square up to those few unscrupulous elements before they destroy the future of our dear nation. The battle against drug trafficking is on and there shall be no compromise."

He restated that drug peddlers were attracted to the airport as a result of the absence of the NDLEA scanning machine, recalling that the equipment was removed due to the ongoing construction at the airport.

He said the agency was making moves to bring in a smaller scanning machine pending when the renovation of the airport would be completed.

## collapses in Enugu

crash because the place is close to the airport. Although the airport has not been functioning for some time now, we didn't want to take chances."

Meanwhile, the South-East Zonal Coordinator of

the National Emergency Management Agency, Dr. Bandle Onimode, has blamed the bridge collapse on the "indiscriminate dumping of refuse by residents in the area."

Onimode said, "The

refuse blocked the flow of water and because of the downpour, water had to find its way into the earth under the bridge and it gave in.

"The Minister of Works has mobilised workers to

commence the repair of the bridge and as you can see, work is ongoing."

The Enugu State Governor, Mr. Sullivan Chime, flew in from Abuja on Thursday to inspect the work on the collapsed bridge.



•Different sections of the collapsed bridge. Photo: Ozioma Ubabukoh