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Police arrest landlord over death of 65-year-old tenant

APRIL 3, 2013 BY SIMON UTEBOR

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Sympathisers at the house. Inset: Sunday.
| credits: Simon Utebor

The police have arrested the landlord of a building on 41 Church Street, off Olamummy Street, Aboru, Lagos State, Mr. Akinrinade Adebayo, over the death of his tenant.

The 65-year-old tenant, Uche Samuel, died after he was beaten by some thugs allegedly hired by the landlord to evict him from the property.

Adebayo was said to have used the thugs because of Samuel's failure to move out of his house.

Samuel, a father of seven and native of

Ohaji-Egbema in Imo State, was an employee of Mandilas Nigeria Limited before his death.

When *Punch Metro* visited the house on Tuesday, Samuel's corpse was still lying on the ground, while many people there discussed the unfortunate incident.

Our correspondent was told that Samuel was attacked by the thugs led by the landlord's child, Tope and two of their neighbours' children around 8pm on Monday.

Samuel died at the Lagos University Teaching Hospital, Idi-Araba around 12.30am on Tuesday.

It was learnt that the tenant and the landlord fell apart some months ago when he (landlord) gave Samuel notice to quit his house.

Samuel was said to have protested the notice since his rent still remained six months to expire.

Wife of the deceased, Ngozi, 57, told *Punch Metro* that her husband was murdered in their bedroom in the presence of their first child.

Ngozi said two days before her husband was killed, the wife of their landlord warned her that "they would soon see since they refused to move out."

She said on the day of the incident, thugs numbering 15 strangled her husband.

Ngozi said, "My son, who is suffering from stroke told me that when they came, they asked, 'Where is that stubborn man and his stubborn son (Solomon)? We will teach you a lesson today. They pounced on him and beat him mercilessly.

"Someone ran to my shop to tell me that my husband had fainted. I rushed to the house and when I got there, I shouted for help and people came. We rushed him to a nearby hospital but he was rejected.

"Some people went to report to the police to enable us to get permit to take him to LUTH. When we got to LUTH, he was certified dead."

She said the hoodlums, apart from killing her husband, destroyed their properties and stole the money he had brought from the bank to enable them to rent another apartment.

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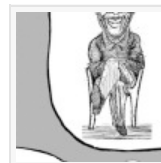
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A relation of the deceased, Mr. Austin Odunze, said when Sunday told him about the quit notice, he asked him to go to his lawyer.

"His (Sunday's) lawyer wrote to the landlord's lawyer about the quit notice. When the landlord received the lawyer's letter, he went and brought a letter from Lagos State Mediation Centre, Akowonjo branch.

"When the man refused to go to the mediation centre, the landlord engaged him in a physical combat in December 2012. After that, Samuel reported the matter to a nearby police station. At the station, Samuel was not pleased with the way the matter was being handled and he requested that it should be transferred to Area M.

"At Area M, the matter was settled and the landlord was told to give him six months to enable him to leave. The landlord agreed. But because of their desperation, they were not happy with Area M's decision. Since then, they started threatening him."

He appealed to the relevant authorities to handle the matter with every sense of justice to avoid inter-tribal conflict in the area.

A brother of the deceased, Mr. Angus Uwenwa, said one of the perpetrators regretted that Samuel died.

Uwenwa said the man had told him that they only went to teach the family a little lesson and that they did not expect he (Samuel) would die.

Punch Metro learnt that apart from the landlord, the police had arrested about eight others in connection with the killing.

However, Tope, was said to have fled when policemen went to the apartment.

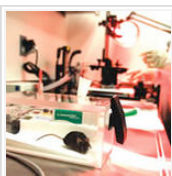
Our correspondent was, however, not able to speak with any policeman at Ile Epo Police Division, where the suspects were being held.

The state police command's spokesperson, Ngozi Braide, said she had not been fully briefed on the incident.

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