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'Man who set himself ablaze owes bank, others'

JANUARY 7, 2014 BY ADELANI ADEPEGBA

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Onigbo and Uchechukwu

A middle-aged man, Frederick Onigbo, who committed suicide by setting himself ablaze behind an NNPC mega station in Gwarimpa, Abuja, owed a bank and others.

Frederick had doused his body with fuel and set it on fire in the bush behind the filling station on December 23, 2013, but his charred corpse was not found until five days later, after a desperate search by his wife and children.

Frederick's corpse was evacuated to the mortuary of the General Hospital, Kubwa by policemen from Gwarimpa Estate Police Division.

The remains will be taken to Awgu, Enugu State for burial this week.

His wife, Uchechukwu, told *PUNCH Metro* at their Gwarimpa village residence on Friday that the deceased was pushed into taking his life by debts and economic hardship.

She explained that Frederick had taken a N300,000 loan from a bank, which he wanted to start a business, but he was duped by his business partner and he became despondent, resulting in the tragedy that befell the family.

Uchechukwu said, "My husband was a very caring man and a peacemaker; I never believed he could kill himself because he was a gentle and romantic person. I believed he must have taken the decision to end his life because he owed a lot of people, including a bank which gave him a loan.

"He wanted to use the money to import goods from India, but his partner duped him and since then, he had not been himself and he also owed other people."

The widow who lamented that she had been saddled with the responsibility of taking care of the seven children her husband left behind, said only support from kind-hearted Nigerians could help her survive the responsibility fate had placed on her doorstep.

The bereaved woman stated that she had to borrow N120,000 to pay the General Hospital Kubwa where her husband's corpse was embalmed.

According to her, Frederick's mother, who died in November, 2013, has yet to be buried and the family is working to raise money for her funeral before Frederick committed suicide.

The National Coordinator, Women and Family Advanced Initiative, Dr. Uche Obi, also urged members of the public to come to the aid of the Onigbo family.

The FCT Police Public Relations Officer, Altienne Daniel, said investigation had commenced into the incident, adding that the police needed to go beyond the general explanation that Frederick committed suicide by probing the motive and other factors surrounding the tragedy.

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