

April 27th, 2015



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Family faults police for releasing daughter's suspected killers

APRIL 27, 2015 : AFEEZ HANAFI 3 COMMENTS

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Scene of the murder; Cecilia

| credits: Afeez Hanafi

Relatives of Cecilia Yourouf, a 33-year-old woman, who was found dead in a farm at Ajise in the Ipokia Local Government Area of Ogun State are at loggerheads with the Ogun State Police Command over the release of three suspects arrested in connection with the death of their beloved.

It was gathered that Cecilia had gone to the farm on March 14, 2015, to harvest vegetables, but did not return home.

It was learnt that her mutilated remains were later found on the farm, with her private parts and one of her breasts cut off, while the rest of the body was covered with

leaves.

PUNCH Metro learnt that on discovery of the body, the family reported at the Owode Police Station and policemen came to the scene to take pictures before the body was deposited at a morgue in Ilaro. The deceased was buried two days later.

Our correspondent was told that the police subsequently mounted surveillance on the farmland, leading to the arrest of the suspects, who were said to be nationals of the Niger Republic. It was learnt that the nomads had been hostile to dwellers of the community for a long time.

An uncle of the deceased, Ashidi Yourouf, faulted the release of the suspects and urged the police to do justice on the case. He described the mother of three as hard-working and generous, despite being physically-challenged.

He said, "I don't think suspects in a case like this should be released. Police must have compromised. We don't have money to fight our case, but we want justice. Cecilia must not die in such a cruel manner and her killers would be allowed to go scot-free.

"With her hand and leg partially paralysed, she still struggled to fend for her children, her mother and herself. She did not deserve to die this way."

The deceased's brother, Philip Yourouf, said his 84-year-old mother had been in sorrow since the death of her sister. He also urged the police to check the excesses of the herdsmen.

He said, "Cecilia's death is a great loss to the family. Our mother is sad. I have been trying to comfort her, but it has been difficult.

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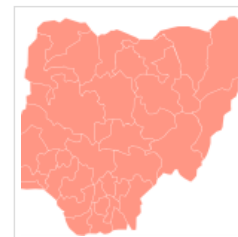
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"Those herdsmen are foreigners, yet they oppress the indigenes. We go to farms with fears. They lay in ambush for us. We want police to stop them us or chase them away from our land."

Another uncle of the deceased, Babatunde, urged that the culprits be brought to book in due course, adding that the family had reported the matter at the state police command headquarters in Eleweran, Abeokuta.

Cecilia's eldest child, 12-year-old Florence, a primary four pupil, said life had been tough for the family since the demise of their mother.

She said, "It was my mother that had been taking care of us since our father left us. Mummy was planning to pay my second term school fees when she died. I have not paid up till now."

The deceased's mother, Agnes, said her health had suffered a setback since her daughter died.

"She was the one who stayed with me all the time. She bought my drugs from what she realised from her trade. My health has been getting worse since Sisilia died."

The Ogun State Police Public Relations Officer, Muiwa Adejobi, confirmed the incident. He, however, denied the deceased's family's allegation that police had compromised their investigation.

Adejobi said the suspects were released on bail as there was no solid evidence linking them with the murder and promised that the command would intensify efforts in bringing the culprits to book.

He said, "The woman was declared missing on March 14 and her corpse was found on the farmland two days after.

"I think she was strangled. The police went there and arrested three suspects, who were almost 500 metres away from where the woman was killed.

"There was no empirical fact that those arrested killed her and we have released them on bail. We cannot keep them in detention so that we don't violate their fundamental human rights.

"Investigation is still on and we are focused. If the suspects have any link with the murder, we will re-arrest them. We are going to spread our tentacles to arrest the culprits.

"The family should not indict the police. We have done the right thing. If the need warrants that we exhume the corpse for proper investigation, we will do that."

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