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**METRO PLUS**

# Hunter shoots wife, mother-in-law, pastor over land

**Published** January 31, 2017

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**Afeez Hanafi**

A hunter at Iwewe-Ichama community in the Okpokwu Local Government Area of Benue State, Jerome Adoko, has been arrested by the police for allegedly shooting his wife, Regina Adoko, his mother-in-law, Esther Edoga, and a pastor, Eze Udoh.

It was learnt that the pastor died from injuries he sustained from the gunshots, while the two other victims were still undergoing treatment in a hospital.

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*PUNCH Metro* gathered that the suspect and his wife had been at loggerheads over the ownership of a parcel of land in the community, while efforts by their relatives to settle the dispute had hit a brick wall.

Jerome was said to have claimed that he owned the land while the wife insisted that they jointly raised fund to buy it.

It was said that both parties had maintained an uneasy silence until last Thursday when Jerome accused his wife of cutting up and cooking an animal he hunted in the bush without his permission.

A relative, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said Jerome cashed in on the Thursday's altercation to attack his wife over the land, adding that the pastor wanted to make peace when he was hit by stray bullets.

He said, "Jerome and his wife have an issue over a parcel of land and families of both parties have been trying to sort it out. But he insisted that the land belonged to him.

"That day, he said his wife cut up and cooked an animal without seeking his consent. He confronted the wife, which led to exchange of words between them. The mother-in-law, who was on a visit to their house, tried to calm them down but to no avail.

"He went into his room and brought out a gun he used for hunting. The mother-in-law raised the alarm. The pastor and other neighbours came out to stop him. He wanted to shoot his wife, but the pastor and the mother-in-law were also hit. The pastor later died, while the wife and her mother are still in the hospital."

A source disclosed to *PUNCH Metro* that Jerome said he had planned to sell the animal to raise some money.

“But nobody believed that claim. We think he actually used the animal as an excuse to pounce on his wife. He wanted to kill her. Some youths beat him to a pulp before the police came to rescue him,” the source added.

The Benue State Police Public Relations Officer, ASP Moses Yamu, who confirmed the incident, said the suspect was being detained at the State Criminal Investigation and Intelligence Department.

Moses said, “He was almost beaten to death by a mob before the police intervened and rescued him. He is in our custody undergoing interrogation.

“According to the report we have, he was quarreling with his wife, Regina Adoko, over a parcel of land. He fatally shot one Eze Udoh (the pastor) and wounded one Esther Edoga (the mother-in-law) and his wife. He will be charged to court after investigation.”

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