

Residents stone power firm official to death in Ogun

Published June 7, 2018



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Peter Ayole. Photo: Family

Samson Folarin

Some residents of Ota-Idiroko, in the Ota area of Ogun State, have been arrested by the police for allegedly stoning to death an official of the Enugu Electricity Distribution Company, Peter Ayole.

The 52-year-old was said to be an auditor at the Abakaliki, Ebonyi State office of the company.

The victim, who was said to be on leave, had reportedly decided to spend the leave with his wife and children at their house in the Ota area.

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PUNCH Metro learnt that Peter had a disagreement with some neighbours, at another site belonging to him, over generator fumes.

He was reportedly protesting the alleged refusal of the neighbours to turn off the generator when he was stoned to death.

His widow, Oluwafunmilayo Ayole, explained that the incident happened on Wednesday, May 23, 2018.

She said, “We were together at home that morning when he said he was going to our site to see how the plumbers were doing. We had had some people coming to ask us that they needed rooms for rent.

“Not up to 30 minutes after he left, I got a call that my husband had fallen after he was stoned. The site is just a stone’s throw from our house, so I got there in no time. I saw that he had been laid on a plank,

lifeless. I asked what happened and I was told that he was stoned by some people who sold confectionary beside the construction site.

“I learnt that when he arrived there, he met the plumbers idle. The plumbers told him they could not work because of the fumes from the generator of the neighbours who were selling confectionary. My husband had complained to me several times about them before and all his appeals to them to shift their generator house were abortive.

“So, he picked a stick and climbed three blocks beside the toilet under construction. He started hitting the roof of their building with the stick and calling them to turn off their generator.”

She explained that one of those in the building made a snide remark about the chartered accountant, telling him to stop disturbing their peace.

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The late Peter reportedly became aggravated when he was called a “mad man” and threatened to continue hitting the roof.

“My husband continued hitting the roof when someone stoned him with something like a *grinding stone*, which hit him in the head. He fell and became unconscious.

“The workers at the site took him to a private facility in the area where he was confirmed dead. He was subsequently brought back to the site.

“We took him to another private hospital, where the doctor did not even allow us to bring him in before confirming him dead. But he said we could still keep him in an airy place to see if he would regain consciousness.

“By evening, we took him to the last hospital where he was again confirmed dead. By this time, blood had started flowing out from his nostrils and mouth,” she added.

Oluwafunmilayo told our correspondent that before her husband was taken to a mortuary, some policemen from the Onipanu division visited the site, saying they had come to arrest the late Peter for

disturbing the peace of the suspects.

She explained that the policemen, on discovering that Peter was dead, demanded that she follow them to make a statement at the station.

“I was weeping and pulling my husband’s legs and head for him to wake up when the policemen arrived and said they had a complaint against him.

“Obviously, those people after seeing the damage they had caused, went to report to the police as a cover-up. One of the men with me later volunteered to make a statement on my behalf at the division,” she said.

Our correspondent learnt that the late Peter, a certified information systems auditor, was survived by seven children.

His elder brother, Isiaka Ayole, a police officer attached to the State Criminal Investigation and Intelligence Department, Yaba, Lagos, described the deceased as “highly intelligent.”

Isiaka said only justice would assuage the pain of the family.

He said, “When I went to the police station, the Divisional Crime Officer told me my brother killed himself. But we checked the statements of the witnesses and they said he was stoned. All I want is justice for my brother,” he added.

Our correspondent gathered that five suspects were arrested by the police for Peter’s death.

The suspects – Morenike Akinleye (43), Ajah Chijioke (46), Sulaimon Akinleye (30), Bose Adebessin (24) and Nurudeen Adekunbi (20) – were later transferred to the State Criminal Investigation and Intelligence Department, Elewera, Abeokuta.

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They were arraigned on Wednesday before an Ota Magistrate’s Court on two counts of manslaughter.

The charge read, “That you, Morenike Akinleye, Ajah Chijioke, Sulaimon Akinleye, Bose Adebessin and Nurudeen Adekunbi, on May 23, 2018, around 12.30pm at Km 6, Ota-Idiroko Road, Ota, Ogun State, in the Ota Magisterial District, did unlawfully conspire together to commit felony, to wit: manslaughter,

thereby committing an offence punishable under Section 324 of the Criminal Code Laws of Ogun State of Nigeria, 2006.

“That you did unlawfully cause the death of one Peter Ayole, aged 52, by stoning him with stones, thereby committing an offence punishable under Section 325 of the Criminal Code Laws of Ogun State of Nigeria, 2006.”

While the defence counsel moved the application for their bail, the prosecutor asked that they be remanded in custody.

The magistrate, J.A. Akan, remanded the defendants in prison and adjourned the case till July 9, 2018.