

Father of corps member killed by naval officer demands justice

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Chukwuemeka

Deji Lambo

Eugene Amadi, the father of the slain member of the National Youth Service Corps, Chukwuemeka Amadi, has said only justice will assuage the pain of the family.

He said the suspected killer of his son should not only be arrested, but be made to face the maximum punishment for the crime.

It had been reported that a naval officer, identified only as Tanko, allegedly shot Chukwuemeka at close range on Saturday, May 26, 2018, in Umukwe, Awaka, in the Owerri North area of Imo State.

Tanko was reportedly attached to a checkpoint along Owerri-Umuahia Road.

Eugene said his late son was on a visit to his mother when he was killed.

He said, “My family is in deep pain for the loss of Chukwuemeka. He came home from where he was serving to see his mother, who was recovering from an accident. He was not a troublemaker; they just killed him. I demand justice.”

The grieving father said Chukwuemeka was consumed in a crisis that greeted a botched leadership election in Umukwe.

He said the election failed because the community elders did not agree on any credible candidate.

Eugene explained that the development prompted a group, the *New Face of Umukwe*, to conduct an election that led to the declaration of one Collins as the chairman of the village.

The election was reportedly rejected by the residents.

“The crisis got the attention of the Chief Judge of Imo State, Paschal Nnadi, who is from Umukwe. The chief judge gathered all Umukwe people on Saturday, May 19, to settle the lingering issue, but the matter was not resolved. So, the case was adjourned till May 29, 2018,” he added.

He said the group acted against the order of the chief judge when it instructed a town crier to call a meeting of residents on Saturday, May 26.

Eugene said, “It was after the group had a meeting with some naval officers on Friday, May 25, that the town crier made the announcement the following day. The community youths, however, challenged the town crier and he ran to the naval officers.

“The town crier, accompanied by a member of the group, returned with a navy officer to Umukwe. The officer beat up two youths without any explanation. It was at that point that my son tried to explain to him that there were issues the elders were resolving about the Umukwe chairmanship race.

“The naval officer who left, returned after some minutes with other naval officials. One of the group members pointed at my son and the officers beat him to a pulp and dragged him to their checkpoint. They had not got to the checkpoint when they shot him dead.”

An eyewitness, Okechukwu Onwana, confirmed Chukwuemeka’s father’s account, identifying the killer officer as Tanko.

PUNCH Metro learnt that the death of Chukwuemeka plunged the village into chaos, as some youths reportedly burnt cars and houses supposedly owned by the naval officers and members of the group.

A joint statement by youth leaders of Awaka and Umukwe, Cyril Kamalu and Ifeanyi Onyebiri, respectively, said the deceased was not a cult member.

Onyebiri said, “The killing has a connection to the leadership tussle in Umukwe. In fact, the new group involved in the killing of Chukwuemeka had tagged us as cult members because we are not in support of

their inordinate ambition. They reported us to the naval officers, led by Abubakar Muhammed, who had a meeting with us. During the meeting, we explained to him that the group was trying to frame us because we were not in support of their plan. And now, the group has killed the secretary of Umukwe, Chukwuemeka, and the naval officer aided them in doing so; we want justice.”

The Director of Information, Nigerian Navy, Commodore Ayo Olugbode, said he would investigate the incident.

He said, “I will investigate the matter. Let me do my findings and I will get back to you.”