

My son was killed before his mother –Ahmadu, Gombe commissioner

Published March 2, 2019

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Haruna

Chima Azubuike

February 16, 2019 has come and gone but the pain and bitter anger it left behind still hungs like a thick cloud over Balanga, a local government area in the southeastern part of Gombe State.

It was the day earlier scheduled for the presidential and National Assembly elections in the country before they were postponed by a week. But while many would remember the day for that; for the Harunas, it would be remembered for tragedy .

On the fateful day, some assailants attacked the home of the state Commissioner for Rural Development, Dr Hassan Ahmadu Haruna, at around 2am, killing his 26-year-old son.

The young Haruna was a final year student of urban and regional planning at Modibbo Adama University of Technology, Yola, Adamawa State.

According to his family members, when young Haruna died, he took with him a substantial part of the joy in the home.

His father, who is a member of the Peoples Democratic Party in Gombe State, had a tradition of travelling to his hometown, Balanga, on the eve of elections in the state, but chose to stay back at his residence in Gombe town, the capital city, this time round.

According to him, the assailants thought he would be in Balanga.

He told *Saturday PUNCH* that the assailants lied to the security guard at his Balanga residence that they were visitors and had spoken to him (Ahmadu) earlier but that his mobile line was no longer reachable.

“Then they suddenly overpowered him and he ran for safety. But I don’t suspect anyone; I consider it all as an act of God. The Bible says vengeance is His. I know there are political enemies who may not be happy with me, but as for me, I don’t think ill of anyone.

“My conscience is clear towards everyone. I have been told several things; I have been told that my son sacrificed himself for the family and took the machete cuts meant for me. As they approached him, they asked, ‘Where is the money?’ He begged them, saying he had no money, but his pleas fell on deaf ears. They ransacked the entire room and killed him in front of his mother,” he said.

The deceased’s elder brother, Yusuf Haruna, described him as humble, ambitious, thoughtful, honest and reliable.

“Haruna was jovial and he was fun to be with. He was also very confident. At around 2am, I was woken up to an unusual sound; I heard my mum crying. Immediately, I tiptoed to the area and tried to open the door. Then I heard the assailants saying ‘if you open the door, you will be killed’. So, I ran away and was able to escape as I left the building. I had to scale the fence to get help for my mum and brother.

“I got to my uncle’s house and he made attempts to reach the police but he was told they didn’t have a driver available to drive the patrol van. By the time the police sorted out their logistics issue and

got to our house, the assailants had left. My mum thought I had been killed as she demanded that I should be brought before her,” he said.

Debunking claims that his late brother was shot dead as some reports had reported on social media, Yusuf said the deceased was cut with a machete in the head and neck.

According to Maimurna, sister of the deceased, the matter has been taken before God as “vengeance belongs to Him”.

“My late brother was a good man; he feared Almighty God,” she said.

Since Haruna’s death, tributes have continued to pour in for him on social media.

One of his friends, identified as Makplang Nickolas, wrote, “You didn’t leave me alone but with a heavy heart.”

Another friend, Manya Kumshi, wrote, “We had great plans for the future; we loved and tried to carry (each other) along.”

The state governor, Dr Ibrahim Dankwambo, was among those who visited Ahmadu’s residence to sympathise with the family.

The commissioner, Gombe State Police Command, Bello Makwashi, in an interview with *Saturday PUNCH*, denied the allegations of a police station that was called for help refused to respond because there was no driver available.

According to him, Gombe is peaceful.

“Insecurity is a thing of the past in the state. What happened to Haruna Hassan Haruna is very unfortunate but we are still investigating the matter. The Divisional Police Officer of Balanga axis has been on his toes since then and will unravel this murder case,” he said.

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