

Policemen kill NURTW member in Akwa Ibom

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Obong Udofia,

Patrick Odey, Uyo

A member of the National Union of Road Transport Workers, Akwa Ibom State Chapter, Obong Udofia, has been allegedly hacked to death by four angry policemen in the state.

Udofia, 45, was the chairman of a Task Force on ‘anti-touting’ of Itam Park.

City Round learnt that an argument broke out between the task force members and a policeman who was using his private car to take passengers outside the park.

In the ensuing scuffle on Thursday evening, the policeman was said to have called four of his colleagues attached to a construction company near the park for support.

It was gathered that the policemen hit Udofia, a father of nine, with the butts of their guns and inflicted injuries on his head.

He reportedly became unconscious and was taken to a private hospital, where he died.

The wife of the deceased, Magret, said she was returning from the market that evening when she was called on the telephone that her husband had been assaulted by policemen and rushed to the hospital.

She said, “By the time I got there, he was already gasping for breath. He died in my presence. I learnt a policeman in mufti was taking passengers near the park when members of the task force working for my husband accosted him and asked him to enter the park to take passengers so that other private drivers would not join him. He resisted and the task force members demanded his car key. He refused. The car was pushed into the park on the orders of my husband.”

Magret said her husband was in a vehicle at the park, unknown to him that the policeman had called four of his colleagues on guard at the construction company to fight with him.

“They arrived at the park immediately and shot at my husband. When the bullets did not hit him, they resorted to using gun butts to hit him till he became unconscious,” she said.

The widow called on the Inspector-General of Police, Mohammed Adamu, and the state Commissioner of Police to ensure justice on the killing.

“I don’t know what will become of my nine children after the death of my husband who was the primary breadwinner of the family. Our eldest child is just 15. My appeal is that my husband should not die in vain because all the evidence points to a deliberate and premeditated murder. My husband and the task force members did not beat the policeman. All they did was to ask him to comply with the regulation of the park and not constitute a nuisance by taking passengers on the roadside because it is illegal in Akwa Ibom,” the distraught woman added.

She said the identity card of one of the policemen fell while he was trying to escape from the scene of the incident.

“The name of the policeman is Sergeant Nwafor Silas, from the Ebonyi State Police Command with service number: 425015 and he is attached to Julius Berger Construction Company,” she said.

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It was gathered that there was apprehension in Afaha Uko community as some members of the NURTW were said to have started planning a reprisal.

The Divisional Police Officer of Itam Division, CSP Francis Irabor, had visited Udofia at the hospital before he died. He promised to launch a full scale investigation into the matter, assuring that appropriate punishment would be meted out to the culprits.

The Police Public Relations Officer, DSP Odiko Macdon, also confirmed the incident but said investigation into the matter was ongoing.

He assured the people that the outcome of investigation would be made known to the public and appealed to them not take the law into their own hands.

Our correspondent learnt that the remains of the late task force chairman had been deposited at the Etang Ekak Mortuary, along IBB Way, Uyo.

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