

# Our brother's killers took away our family's happiness –Siblings of Rivers man killed at a football viewing centre

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Uchemadu, Amadi

**CHUKWUDI AKASIKE** speaks with relatives of Ichebani Amadi, a 27-year-old man, who was shot in the chest by gunmen suspected to be cult members in Rivers State

Nothing probably captures the public mood of Eneka community in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State better than despair, shock and bewilderment.

A large number of people had gathered at a bar, which also has a football viewing centre, to watch the match between Liverpool and Huddersfield on Friday, April 26, 2019 when some gunmen, suspected to be cult members opened fire and killed three persons, including a teenage girl. Another bitter irony is that the venue is named Security Bar, which was perhaps the reason why many people thronged the place to drink and watch football, believing that their security was guaranteed. They were wrong.

However till now, the motive for the killing is unclear as the gunmen were said to have fired randomly and sporadically at the crowd, without targeting anyone in particular.

According to eyewitnesses, the gunmen attacked Security Bar at about 9.20pm and shot sporadically, at stomach and chest level. They left immediately and in the aftermath of the sad event, the community has been going through a period of anguish and terrible confusion.

Though business activities have slowly started to pick up within the community, Security Bar has remained closed based on police order placed at its main frontage.

One of the casualties of the attack was 27-year-old Ichebani Amadi, who died shortly after being shot in the chest by the gunmen.

His elder brother, Mr. Ewhule Amadi, was initially reluctant to talk as he was overcome by grief. He said the Amadis would forever mourn the gruesome death of one of their sons.

He, however, insisted that contrary to the claims in some quarters, the attack was not cult-related. Even a teenage girl from Elelewon, a distant community from Eneka, was also one of those shot dead by the bandits, he said.

“What happened here was not a cult-related matter. Anytime something of this nature comes up, the police will say it is cult-related. They don’t have facts on this; so, they cannot claim that it is cult-related. If it were to be cult-related, those people would pick those they wanted to pick and not spray the place with bullets to kill people who were not cult members. So, I don’t believe that attack was cult-related,” he said.

Narrating how he heard about his younger brother’s untimely death, Amadi said he received a call in the night from one Peter Eruwari, who informed him that Ichebani had been shot by gunmen.

“The attack happened some minutes after 9pm on Saturday. I received a phone call from one Peter Eruwari. He told me to rush down because of my brother, Ichebani Amadi. Initially, I thought it was a wound that could be managed. But by the time I got to the place, he had been rushed to the hospital. I was told that a group of men with gun arrived at the viewing centre in a Toyota Avalon. Two of the men came out of the car and began to spray bullets inside the viewing centre.

“As the bullets hit the victims, they fell in different areas. Some people sustained injuries. My brother was shot in the chest and he died. What can I do? I don’t have anybody to complain to



***Ichebani***

except God. We buried him on Sunday morning,” a pensive Amadi lamented.

Describing Ichebani as an easy-going young man, Amadi, who spoke at the family’s compound, stated that everybody in Eneka community could attest to the fact that the late Ichebani was a good man and not a cult member. “My late brother was a very good man and that is why I am worried about his death. If the bullet had only hit him in one of his legs, he would have survived and at least, he would still be alive. Now, he is no longer with us and we cannot reach him again. The killers did something grievous; they took our happiness away. Our mother and father died long ago; I am standing as his father now.

“He was good; almost everybody in this area will testify to this. When things happen like that, they begin to tag people names. Some of those that were killed during the attack were strangers who came to watch football match at the viewing centre. If you don’t have cable TV in your house, you go there and watch football games. Even some people who can watch the matches in their homes still go to viewing centres to watch because of the interesting arguments that ensue during matches among football lovers. He had finished secondary school and was aiming to get admission into the university through JAMB,” he added.

Speaking on efforts made to bring in policemen, Amadi explained that he called the police at about 9.40pm, who, according to him, insisted that they had no vehicle to chase the gunmen.

“I called the police around 9.39pm to come to our aid, but they (police) told me they did not have any vehicle and that I should provide them with a vehicle. The only vehicle with me was the one I

was using to move around. My younger brother later died in the hospital around 1am. I did not see the police until I left my father's house and went back to my house.

“How can the police operate with keke (tricycle)? They are suffering; they have no vehicle. Government should come to their aid. How can they be operating with keke? Is it wise? In Nigeria, the police are not doing well; I cannot tell any of my relatives to join police. The police are not well paid, yet they are being killed like that by criminals,” he said.

Amadi, however, called on government to improve security across the country, adding that those responsible for the incident must be brought to justice. Maintaining that government must take the issue of security seriously, an angry Amadi called for change of government if the issue of insecurity across the country was not resolved.

“Government must improve security. Look at what is happening in the country. If the government cannot solve the state of insecurity, another government should come in and take over government for six months or one year. When criminals are arrested, they are released once someone places a simple phone call to the police; ordinary phone calls settle the matter,” he said.

The deceased's other elder brother, Uchemadu, disclosed that apart from Ichebani that died, three other members of the family; Edwin Amadi, Gabriel Amadi and Eric, sustained gunshot injuries. Uchemadu called on the Federal Government to provide more sophisticated weapons for policemen, adding that bandits now wield weapons better than what the police have.

“Since that day, there has been no happiness; happiness has left our homes. Our movement is somehow restricted. Police cannot do this alone; the Federal Government should provide sophisticated weapons for the police. You don't face someone with big guns with guns that look like toys. It is not possible to win such a battle. Government has the money to buy sophisticated guns to improve security; it should do so,” Uchemadu stressed.

Speaking in a telephone interview with *Saturday PUNCH*, the Chairman, Community Development Committee, Rumuohegwu in Eneka, Samuel Eberechi, said he was awoken by people who were banging on his door in order to get a vehicle that would take some of the injured persons to the hospital. Eberechi described the attack at the viewing centre as unexpected. The CDC chairman pointed out that efforts were ongoing to form a vigilante group to assist the police in ensuring

security in the area. He expressed sadness at the way bandits come from outside the community to carry out such dastardly acts.

Speaking on the matter, the State Police Public Relations Officer, Nnamdi Omoni, said that investigation was still ongoing, promising that those behind the attack would be apprehended and brought to justice.

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**Contact: [theeditor@punchng.com](mailto:theeditor@punchng.com)**

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