

My mother took bullets for her grandchildren –Son of Delta woman slain by gunmen

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Chiedu Gwam, whose mother and brother were recently shot dead in Asaba, Delta State by yet-to-be-identified gunmen, speaks to MATTHEW OCHEI about the tragedy

Can you describe the circumstances in which your mother and elder brother were killed by gunmen?

My mother, Mrs Loretta Gwam, who was 59 years old, and brother, Pastor Alfred Gwam, 38 were shot dead in our family house in Asaba on December 15 around 2am by yet-to-be-identified gunmen. The entire incident is shocking to me. I was called on the phone and informed that some armed men invaded my family house in Asaba and murdered my mother and one of my elder brothers in cold blood.

My mother, sister and two elder brothers were in the house with their children and wives praying that night when some armed men came and opened fire on them, killing my mother and my brother.

My immediate elder brother was also shot on the chest and he is currently battling for his life in the hospital. The children in the house witnessed the shootings.

After the gunmen left, my other elder brother, who had also sustained a gunshot injury, managed to rush my mother and our eldest brother to the hospital. But on arriving at the hospital, the doctors confirmed my mum and our eldest brother dead.

How did the gunmen gain access to the house?

I was told that while they (family) were praying in the house that night, the assailants tore the window's net and started shooting through the window. And my mother stood as a shield. She was shielding the children; my elder brother was doing the same thing and they became the victims of the gruesome murder.

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Who do you suspect could be behind the shootings?

The entire incident is shocking to me. My mother served this state as a teacher for 35 years before she retired in February this year; she retired from active service as a school principal. She was appointment onto a board set up to review the state's education system and she served with all her strength.

Chiedu

My eldest brother is a pastor with Living Faith Church (Winners Chapel). These two people who were murdered in cold blood had no issue with anyone.

They were people who lived lives of service to the people. Everyone in the neighbourhood can attest that we all live very humble Christian lives. There was no threat from any quarters, to the best of my knowledge. But one thing I know is that justice must be done in this case.

What steps has your family taken since the incident?

As I speak to you now, our house has been deserted for fear of the unknown. We don't really feel safe. The perpetrators are at large. The trauma the family, especially the children who witnessed the shooting, are going through at the moment is unbearable. We are waiting for police investigation into the incident.

Have you reported the case at the police station?

Yes, the matter was immediately reported at the Asaba GRA Police Station. I know the police are doing the little they can but I want to call upon Governor Ifeanyi Okowa to step into the matter.

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How do you want the governor to intervene?

I am appealing to the Delta State Governor and other well-meaning Nigerians to call for a full-scale investigation into this matter to bring these men who have done this evil to me and my family to book. I sincerely want to call upon His Excellency, the Executive Governor and Chief Security Officer of this state, Dr Ifeanyi Okowa, to step into this matter and ensure that these men are brought to book.

The remains of my mother and my eldest brother, as of today are lying in the mortuary, while my immediate elder brother is still battling for life in the hospital. We don't know what motivated the killing; we are asking for justice to be served. I am also appealing to the government to make security available to other members of our family, because as it is today, our lives are in danger. We are living in fear of these assailants because we don't know what they came for.

What kind of person was your mother?

My mum was the best in the world. She made huge sacrifices to see that her children were trained; she did her best to give us the best education. All her five sons are graduates and our only sister is currently an undergraduate. She took a loan to pay for our education.

What about your late brother?

My eldest brother was more than just a brother; he was a father because he took responsibilities when the man I knew as our biological father deserted home for the past 15 years. My mother was everything to us. Whoever has done this evil to us, the judgment of God will catch up with them.

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What is the condition of your other brother who sustained gunshot injuries?

My immediate elder brother, Kelvin Ngozi Gwam, is still battling for survival from bullet wounds in his chest. Currently, my family is still in shock over the death of our beloved mother and eldest brother.

How do you feel that your mother and brother died on the same day, in the same moment?

Their death is heartbreaking and shocking. I still can't believe this. It seems to me like I'm dreaming. I never saw it coming in any way.