

Thugs killed my husband over communal land tussle, made me single mother of four at 21 – Delta widow

A 21-year-old widow and mother of four, Chidimma Ozumba, speaks to MATTHEW OCHEI about the killing of her husband, Clatus Ozumba, 42, by suspected thugs fighting over communal land in Delta State

WHAT actually happened on the day your husband was killed?

I don't know what happened but what I know is that on that fateful day, my husband told me that he was going to the farm to check our watermelon, only for me to be called after a while that my husband had been shot dead.

Who were you told shot your husband?

They said the men who shot my husband were thugs from Ogwashi-uku community.

What happened between your husband and the thugs?

I could not figure out what exactly happened between my husband and his killers. But they said the Ogwashi-Uku people came with thugs and two chief priests to perform rituals at our community junction. The Ogwashi-Uku people have been fighting with our community over Otulu land. They said our community belongs to them.

I was told that on that day after making their sacrifices, these Ogwashi-Uku people walked to a piece of land sold by our community for the purpose of using its

proceeds to provide electricity, and started destroying the fence. That was where trouble started and they shot my husband to death.

Was there any effort to rescue your husband or save his life after he was shot?

No; they shot him and took his body away. It was in that process that our youths took to the street and held some of these men before the arrival of the military.

Are the killers in custody now?

I was told that our youths handed them over to the Army and the police who came and whisked them away. Till date we have not heard anything about their whereabouts.

Was the body of your husband eventually recovered from those men?

After killing him, they took the body away and the community has been doing everything possible to recover the body but the police said the body was kept at the mortuary. The police said it would not be released to us until an autopsy is conducted. And this is why I am appealing to the Delta State governor to give my late husband justice because we are peasant farmers; and we are begging the police that the remains of my husband should be released to us for proper burial.

How old was your husband?



He was 42 years old.

How long have you been married?

We had been married for five years.

How many children do you have?

We have four children.

How old are you?

I am 21 years old.

How would you describe your husband?

My husband was not a troublemaker. Since we got married five years ago, he had been very kind to me. He was a hard-working man. We

never fought for one day and I never saw him fight with anyone. I was shocked to hear that my husband was shot dead.

Is there something you want government to do for you?

I want the government to intervene and find a lasting solution to clashes in the community. If they keep quiet, more lives may be lost and more property will be destroyed. We are begging the government to help us. Now, they have made me a widow by force; who will help me to train our children? It was difficult for the two of us when my husband was alive; and now that he is dead, how will I raise them single-handedly? I am appealing to well-meaning individuals to come to my assistance towards the training my children.