

Rivers wedding guests beat policewoman to death, 16 arrested

30th April 2024

| By Dennis Naku

| Map of Rivers State

It was a tragic scene when a group of youths travelling for a wedding outside Rivers State attacked and hacked a female Police Inspector, Mrs Christiana Erekere, to death at her duty post in Taabaa Police Station, Khana Local Government Area of the state.

The incident occurred on Thursday, April 25, 2024, when the youths numbering over 30 in two buses and a car were stopped for a routine check in front of the police station.

The deceased, a widow, was among a team of policemen conducting the search when the youths travelling to Akwa Ibom State for a wedding programme approached them before they carried out the tragic act.

Trouble started when a police team queried the validity of the document of one of the cars they were travelling in.

A source who pleaded anonymity due to the sensitive nature of the incident said the youths became aggrieved and blocked the road and demanded that a senior cop who had their car papers should return them and allow them to go.

He further said the officer handed over the papers to them and after completing the search asked them to leave, but that they refused, alleging that they saw Mrs. Erekere filming them during the melee and immediately tried to seize her mobile phone.

“When they could not take her phone, they started throwing stones at her and used sticks to hit her. They also beat the other policemen who ran away. But they continued to beat the woman until she passed out.”

The source said, “On April 25, 2024, at about 2:30 pm, Inspector Christiana Erekere (female) while on duty at Taabaa Division in Khana Local Government Area of Rivers State, was beaten to death by some group of persons with three vehicles from Delta State going to Akwa Ibom State for marriage.

“The boys were intercepted at a stop and search point, directly opposite the police station, Taabaa, by a police officer... The particulars of one of the vehicles were collected by a Deputy Superintendent of Police because of unclear explanation concerning them.

“The police officer decided to go to the office so that he could be furnished with sufficient information. Now, the deceased saw the way the boys were chasing her superior officer and she started raising an alarm for help so that the attack would be prevented, but unfortunately, no one was there to assist or prevent this group of people that succeeded in attacking the police station and killing the innocent woman.

“The boys quickly attacked her because they said she was making a video of them. Even when she fainted, they continued beating her and left her and drove away, on their way to Akwa Ibom.

“The source said they were apprehended by another police team while trying to escape and that about 17 persons were identified and arrested while others were still at large.

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Meanwhile, the family of the deceased woman has called for justice, saying their sister was serving the nation and did not deserve to be killed like that.

The elder sister of the victim, Mrs Nule Felix, lamented that her sister was mercilessly killed and that she was rushed to a hospital but was only confirmed dead.

Nule said, “All efforts at the hospital to revive her were abortive. She has been deposited in the mortuary. She was a widow with four children and her aged mother who is over 80 years. We are seeking for justice.”

Meanwhile, the Rivers State Police Command said it had arrested 16 of the persons involved in the barbaric act, pointing out that investigations were ongoing.

The spokesperson for the command, Grace Iringe-Koko, in a statement on Monday, said the Commissioner of Police, Olatunji Disu, led some senior officers to the victim’s family, saying the Inspector was killed in the line of duty.

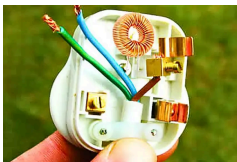
The statement reads, “The Rivers State Police Command announces the arrest of 16 persons in connection with the tragic death of Inspector Christiana Erekere, who was murdered in the line of duty on April 25, 2024, at approximately 4 pm.

“According to preliminary investigations, the incident occurred when a group of individuals travelling in a Lexus salon car was stopped for routine checks at the checkpoint in front of the Taabaa Police Station.

“However, the occupants became agitated and proceeded to barricade the road, obstructing the movement of other vehicles. After completing the necessary checks, the police officers requested that the individuals leave the scene.

“Unfortunately, they refused, alleging that Inspector Erekere had recorded a video of their disruptive behaviour using her mobile phone.”

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It was stated that in their attempt to seize Inspector Erekere's phone forcefully, the youths launched a violent attack against her, striking her with stones. The severity of the assault caused Erekere to lose consciousness, and she was immediately transported to Nnadum Hospital in Bori. Regrettably, she succumbed to the injuries sustained during the attack.

"The Rivers State Police Command has initiated a thorough investigation into this abhorrent incident, and all individuals involved will be apprehended and brought to justice. The command extends its deepest condolences to the family of the deceased colleague during this difficult time."