

Decomposing body of missing pastor found in Bayelsa residence

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| By Samuel Ese

 Map of Bayelsa State

Residents of the Jacob Beredugo Street in the Ekeki area of Yenagoa, the Bayelsa State capital, were shocked when the decomposed remains of a 45-year-old pastor, Esere Okilo, were discovered in his residence.

The late Okilo who hailed from Nembe-Bassambiri had been missing for about 15 months before his remains were discovered on Wednesday.

One of his sisters had decided to check on the residence by looking through the window and saw the lifeless body of his brother sitting on the toilet bowl in only his singlet.

The discovery confused the residents even as many of them claimed they were not aware and did not perceive any foul odour of a decomposing corpse.

When *PUNCH Metro* visited the incident scene on Thursday afternoon, residents of the area were seen in groups discussing the sad fate of the deceased known as a loner and a man of God.

Okilo was said to have occupied one of the two flats in the compound while his elder brother and wife occupied the other flat.

“The two brothers were not on talking terms as he was reported to always refer to the brother and the wife in uncomplimentary terms,” a resident confided in *PUNCH Metro*.

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Another resident said, “The toilet door was allegedly locked from the inside.”

It was gathered that few months ago, the pastor's immediate family had a meeting expressing concern over his whereabouts and declared him missing, but some family members thought he had gone on one of his usual church programmes.

Another neighbour disclosed that the operatives of the Ekeki Police Division who came to evacuate the lifeless body arrested the elder brother on suspicion of covering up the death of the deceased.

A police source disclosed that some medical staff at the Federal Medical Centre in Yenagoa alleged that there were signs that formalin was sprinkled on the corpse to cover up the foul smell from the apartment.

“Medical staff at the Federal Medical Centre said there are signs that a substance like formalin was sprinkled on the corpse to stop the smell.”

Our correspondent could not independently verify this claim as of the time of filing this report.

The Police Public Relations Officer, Bayelsa State Police Command, Mr Musa Mohammed, did not pick up his calls when contacted on the issue.