

# My pregnant mother bled to death after assault by stepfather – Teenage tailor

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| By Biodun Busari

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*An 18-year-old tailor and resident of Okpella village in Etsako East Local Government Area of Edo State, Gift Idogun, narrates to BIODUN BUSARI how her mother, Franca Ediawe, and her unborn child died after suffering physical assault from her stepfather*

*What do you have to say about the death of your mother?*

My mum died recently, precisely on June 24, 2025. Her death was a result of the consistent domestic violence she underwent at the hands of her husband, who is my stepfather.

*How often did your stepfather physically abuse your mother?*

It was a regular and disturbing occurrence. He maltreated her. As far as I know, it started occurring in 2020.

*What was the issue that resulted in maltreatment of your mother at the hands of your stepfather?*

I can't say something in particular was the cause. He would just beat her anytime there was an argument or misunderstanding. These issues usually came up whenever my mother confronted her about extramarital affairs. He didn't like that my mother mentioned the issue.

As a result of this, he would beat her into a stupor. I could only weep and tried to stop him, but I didn't have the strength or influence to do so. I remember that after the 2020 incident, he beat and molested her again in June 2021. My mum just gave birth in December that year,

and the baby died the same day it was born.

***Do you mean that he assaulted her even while she was pregnant?***

Yes. There wasn't any time that he couldn't beat her. The beating in June 2021 was brutal, so it affected her pregnancy. That was the reason the baby died the day it was born. It was December 14, 2021. My mother had some of the pictures of herself from that time.

***Was that the first child your mum gave birth to in your stepfather's house?***

No, that was the third one.

***Where are the other two?***

We are together with my aunt. She's the one taking care of us now.

***What did your mother do all the time she was suffering domestic violence in her marriage?***

Initially, my mother left the marriage. My stepdad's family came begging that he had changed for good. It was that same year, 2021. After he beat her, and the molestation and physical assault became unbearable for her, she left. But unfortunately, after they came begging, she returned.

That was before she gave birth to the child that died. In 2017, when she had her first pregnancy, he beat her, but that child survived, although he still denied it at that time.

It practically happened that he beat her whenever she was pregnant. I can say it was only 2019 when she was pregnant with the second child that he didn't beat her.

***What was the event that led to your mother's death this year?***

It all began on April 27, 2025. It was on a Sunday. My stepdad took my siblings out. It was getting dark, and then they were asleep. He took them out on a bike during the day. My mum had to call her husband on the phone to bring the kids home on time. The reason was that there was a pandemonium in the community that day.

There was a kind of communal clash. It was as if he were drunk because of the way he became furious that day. Eventually, he brought the kids back home on a motorcycle. He wanted to go out again, and my mum told him not to go out with the bike so that he would not have an accident on the way. He became angry and started shouting at her.

He yelled and began to ask some questions. He asked some rhetorical questions. My mum wanted to talk, and he slapped her. When he began beating her, I started filming it. I did not have the power to separate them or stop the beating.

I sent the videos to my uncle in Abuja and my aunt in Benin City. I told them that my stepfather wanted to kill their sister. I told them that I was the only person left with her and couldn't do anything. After he stopped beating her, I took her to the police station to report.

They gave us a medical report to go and treat her. We went to the hospital thereafter. After the treatment, she went to my grandmother's house. On May 12, her family begged her to go back to her husband's house. When she returned to her matrimonial home, everything seemed to be calm.

So, on the 24th of June, it was a Tuesday, my mother complained to him that she had not been feeling fine since he beat her that day. That was what my stepdad used as an excuse to resume the beating.

In my presence, he slapped her. He started beating her. I began to cry as I pulled her up on the floor. She was bleeding all over her body.

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### *Did he show concern when she was bleeding?*

No, he did not. That resulted in her death. I then took her to a private hospital around 11 at night. Then, she went into forced labour. The doctor was trying to bring out the baby, but he couldn't. I called my stepdad, but he didn't answer. I kept calling him, and when he eventually picked up the phone, he said his wife never told her when she left for the hospital, so he wouldn't help.

The doctor and the nurses were angry at his response. They had to explain to him that my mummy could not deliver the baby naturally. The baby had died inside her womb, and it would take an operation to bring the baby out. They said the baby was turned upside down, and the placenta was in front.

They told him that there was no surgeon in their hospital and that she would be transferred to the General Health Centre, and that he should come in his car. He hissed at them and said in anger, 'I'm coming.' She was bleeding profusely, and they injected her to stop the bleeding, but it did not. My stepdad did not come. Unfortunately, my mummy died around 3:34 am.

### *Did you call any family member?*

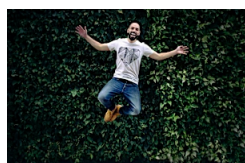
I called my uncle in Abuja and narrated everything to him. My stepfather came to the hospital at 5:48 am. The doctor asked him, 'What are you doing here?' The doctor asked him why he refused to show up when he was called upon.

He (the doctor) asked him why he was not picking up his calls. He didn't talk. He didn't feel any remorse. The doctor, then, told him his presence was no longer needed. He just went to his car without even asking about his wife. That was the last time I saw him.

### *How did your mother's family react to her death?*

At about 8 am, we went to my mother's elder sister's house in the same village, which was a bit far. We went together to report to the police station that my mother was dead. It was the same police station that I went to initially when he beat her.

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They asked us to write a statement. But my aunt said that the police should not arrest him. She just wanted him to go to the hospital to sign some documents for the doctors to operate on her and bring the dead baby out. It was forbidden in our village to bury two people together in a grave.

So, all that they tried, my mum's husband did not come. The doctor couldn't remove the baby without the husband's approval. Nobody signed the papers. They did not operate on my mum to remove the baby.

That was how she was buried with her pregnancy. My uncle, who should have signed, was not around. It was only my stepfather who was qualified to sign the papers.

### ***Where is your uncle now?***

He still lives in Abuja. He came back to that village the next day after my mum died. They did not put my mother in the mortuary. She was buried around 2 am of the following day after she passed away. Her body was swollen; that was why they buried her.

### ***What is your stepdad's name?***

His name is John Ediaawe. He's a mechanic.

### ***After your mum's burial, what steps has her family taken to get justice for her?***

They wanted to arrest him; the family went to his house with policemen, but he was not arrested.

### ***Did he resist an arrest?***

No. They said his family was influential in the village. He has connections in the village. He is untouchable. So, anyone bearing Ediaawe usually goes scot-free with crime. The police would remove their hands from the matter that concerned them.

When my second aunt came to the village from Benin City, the police invited us to their station. My stepdad did not come. His lawyer, brother, and sister were there to represent him. The police informed us that what occurred was a family matter, and as such, we should attempt to settle it amicably. They said if they arrested him, it was his children who would suffer because their mother had passed away.

It was more of a threat than an appeal. My stepdad's nephew even threatened to shoot us when my aunt, cousin, and I went to their family's house to ask his uncle to come and sign the papers for my mother to be operated on. In the end, the man walks free on the street despite causing my mother's death.

### ***When did your stepdad marry your mum?***

They married in 2016. My parents had family issues, so my mother left my dad. They went their separate ways in 2014.

***Did your dad attempt to help your mum at any time she was going through her ordeal?***

My dad was not aware of anything. It was after her death that all these were made known to him.