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NEWS:

The Botem murder: The full story **... killing of an aide to a council boss**

Unknown gunmen have killed one Suka Nnamane, Senior Special Assistant to the Caretaker Committee Chairman of Tai local government areas of Rivers State.

Local sources said Suka was killed in Botem community, where he was undertaking some official assignments bordering on the October 1 Independence Day Anniversary celebration for Tai council. They hinted that the assassins numbering more than five drove to where the fellow was and opened fire on him, until he fell down. All the assailants were reported to have escaped, unhurt into thin air.

Mrs Ethel Mgbarabara, caretaker committee chairman of the council is quoted by a broadcast media in Rivers State as accusing the former council chairman of Tai of being behind the killing of her aide. It would be recalled that Jacobson Nbina had served Tai as former deputy chairman and latter chairman of the council till May this year, when he officially left office at the expiration of his tenure.

There seems to be a lingering political crisis in Tai local government, over who would be the next council chairman in the forth coming local government polls in the state.

One Chief Monday Ngor is said to be the arrowhead and godfather of Tai local government politics. Unconfirmed sources hinted that he is sponsoring Nbina for a second tenure in office, as executive chairman of the local government.

The murder occurred Sunday, September 30, 2007 of a post graduate student of the Rivers State University of Science and Technology, Port Harcourt and the special assistant to the CTC boss of Tai local government area while, purportedly, on an official assignment to Botem, one of the communities in the area.

This medium learnt that Mr. Suka Nnamane who did a child dedication about four weeks ago was gruesomely murdered on the fateful day by Botem youth after he was identified by one Paul Bazia, the younger brother to John Bazia, a former honourable member of the River State House of Assembly, as being on a wanted list of the group.

Late Nnamane, we learnt, was assassinated as he went to the house of the headmaster of Primary School I, Ukem to arrange for the school band to perform at the 47th Independence Anniversary celebration of Nigeria at the council headquarters, Saakpenwa on Monday.

The deceased who hailed from Ukem was driven to the headmaster's house in Botem by a kinsman, Azus Bebe who is a commercial motorcycle operator and who has his God to thank for surviving the day, though not without severe bruises and thorough pounding from the youths at Botem.

Azus, who serves as primary witness to the police at Tai, disclosed that they were going for an inspection of the musical instruments in the company of the headmaster when youths riding on motor bikes accosted them and brutalized his companion to death, sparing him only because "he was not on their list". "You're Suka", the youths reportedly charged. "You, David Gbaranwi and others are on our list. For you, your own is finished today."

As the deceased was knocked down, it was learnt a plank with nails passing through it was used to strike his head at the top middle, sinking down to the brains.

We also learnt that the group boasted that they were under the auspices of a former Tai Council Chairman, Chief Jacobson Nbina, who is largely associated with a return bid for the exalted local council seat. CTC boss for the area, Mrs. Ethel Ngbarabara was so devastated by the incident that she could not more than confirm the loss of her SA to this medium, while the late man's corpse has journeyed from the police Station through the Braithwait Memorial Hospital (BMH), Port Harcourt to the Bori General Hospital Mortuary where it now lies.

Confirming the incident, police spokesperson for the state, DSP Ireju Juliet Barasua said she has briefed the state police commissioner, Mr. Felix Ogbaudu on the incident, but added that no arrests have, however, been made. On his part, Chief Nbina told our source that he had nothing to do with the incident which he said was far from being political, but was a rather personal axe grinding out.

He said he has not even been in touch with Paul Bazia through out this year after being accused by his elder brother, John of not supporting his (John's) bid to return to the state assembly for Tai constituency. He said the incident was identified as a revenge killing for the late nephew of the Bazias (kingkarma) who was alleged killed by assassins in a clash between Botem and Kpite communities not long go.

He further said: "Nobody was campaigning on Sunday. There was no political function. In fact, according to the CTC chairman, the guy went to organize a band for October 1st events. So there was no political activity in Tai on Sunday. It was, therefore a personal matter."

On other boy's incidenting at the police station over bloodlust of alleged Nbina boys, the former council boss said he knew nothing about the charges.

There are numerous reports of brutalization of youths said to be outside the Nbina Camp. From the councillorship Primaries of the PDP in Tai, many youths have had broken heads, amputated legs, matchette cuts, internal bleeding and others.

Barinua Ngia from Sime, Nbina's community, was at the police station incidenting on how he suffered a broken head from youths that broke into his house Saturday night by minutes past 10.0'clock and brutalized him because he belonged to an opposing camp.

Another Sime youth, Michael Nkpowa would have lost his head and life as a knife swing allegedly caught his arm for a bit of luck when fellow youths on September 24 attempted to force him into a "home" camp. His father, Chief James Nkpowa, who corroborated his son's story, said that after the attack was incidented at the Tai police station, the PDP stated intention to reinforce for a mass arrest in the community but rather moved in when complainants were in hospital for treatment and, as a result, could not make any arrest and has done nothing else ever since.

Names like Nkoba, Mbete Dimkpa, John Aminikpo (aka Nkaka), Esprayo, Nemia and many others were said to have master minded the attacks.

Meanwhile, the Joint Task Force (JTF) in the state is said to have moved into Botem, sending residents fleeing for fear of being arrested.