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Kidnapping: Father grieves as DSS kills son in error

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BY OUR REPORTER ON APRIL 15, 2015

ORIENTAL NEWS

From **GEORGE ONYEJIUWA, Owerri**

The people of Akabo community in Ikeduru Local Government Area of Imo State are yet to recover from the brutal murder of a young man by the men of the Department of State Security, DSS, who mistook him for a kidnapper they had trailed to the community.

Oriental News reliably gathered that the men of the DSS were in the Akabo area to apprehend a kidnap suspect whose father had been arrested, but as the security men were driving around in search of the suspect, they ran into the deceased, Ugochukwu Obi, 18, who was said to have gone to Ama John in Akabo to repair his cell phone.

It was learnt that when the deceased was stopped by the security men, he took to his heels apparently because he was afraid and instantly the DSS men opened fire on him.

However, when they discovered he was not the suspect they were after they took him to a nearby hospital, where he was rejected.

The DSS operatives then took him to the Federal Medical Centre, FMC, and abandoned him there.

Narrating his anguish, the father of the deceased, Mr. Obi Okpo, who hails from Arochukwu in Abia State but resides in the Akabo community, said on that fateful Saturday, March 14, he was at work when he was informed that some policemen had shot his son and took him away.

His words: "On March 14 while at work I was informed by a neighbour that some policemen had shot my

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first son and later took him away. On hearing that I immediately left the work I was doing and went to Iho, Ikeduru Police station to find out if my son was taken there. But when I got to the police station I was told that there was no such case and the police officers directed me to Shell Camp Police Station in Owerri. At the station, I was also told that there was no such case and it was at that point that I had to inform my brother-in-law, Barrister Obasi Igwe, who told me that he was in Arochuku that night and that he will be coming back to Owerri that same night to assist me in the search."

The distraught father disclosed that the following day being Sunday he and his brother-in-law, Igwe continued in the search for his son who they never knew was already dead.

He said that they had to go back to the scene of the shooting at Ama John to make inquiries from those around and luckily a man they met there volunteered to give them a number with which to contact one of the DSS personnel who was apparently part of the operation.

According to Mr. Okpo, when the call was made, a man directed them to go to the office of the Department of State Security in Owerri that he was in Abuja.

He said that when they got to the DSS office they met the deputy director who said he was from Plateau State and when they narrated their problem he told them that he was not competent to speak on the matter and directed them to the state director.

When they met the Imo State director he told them that the security operatives were chasing some kidnap suspects, and that the boy ran away when he was approached, and that was why he was shot.

He, therefore, advised them to take their complaints to Abuja as the operatives were not from the state.

Speaking in a similar vein, Mr. Igwe, a lawyer, said that when they met with the Imo State director of the DSS "he showed no concern on the killing of an innocent young man by his men" and rather had demanded to know from them why the deceased fled when he was stopped by the security operatives?

Igwe also disclosed that at the FMC, Owerri, the doctor who treated the young man explained that he had extracted bullets around the boy's waist, adding that the doctor said the boy's scrotum was shattered and both his large and small intestines were perforated by bullets and had to be stitched.

He also disclosed that the doctor said that a vein that led to the liver was also ruptured and was dripping blood, which they did not have the equipment to handle.

It was learnt that Ugochukwu who was infused with pints of blood died 30 minutes later.

Therefore, the father of the deceased said that he wants justice to be done over the brutal murder of his son and those involved brought to book.

He maintained that there was nowhere in the constitution of the country where security operatives are given the power to shoot and kill somebody because he ran away without them first confirming his culpability or otherwise.

In a petition by Igwe to the IGP, the Attorney General and Minister of Justice, and Imo State Commissioner of Police, on behalf of the father of the deceased, the lawyer stated that at the Emergency Unit of the FMC the man who brought the boy (Ugochukwu Obi) to the hospital left his identity as ASP Innocent Osuji, Force N0: 5059 and Phone N0:08030978271.

The petitioner also urged those the petition was addressed to, to do a thorough investigation to ensure that justice was done.

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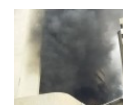
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