



Late Chief Arodu



Madam Foster Arodu

They've killed my son, who will bury me?

Asks 96-year-old woman whose 68-year-old son
was murdered in Rivers

From CHRIS ANUCHA, Port Harcourt

The greatest wish of 96 years old woman in Akabuka, in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area of Rivers State,

Madam Fester Arodu, was for her son, chief Innocent Arodu, to give her a befitting burial any time she joined her husband in the grave, or as she sometimes puts it, "when my maker calls me home." Those very close to the nonagenarian disclosed to the Niger Delta Chronicle, how she sang

it almost like a song to the ears of anyone, who cared to listen to what later graduated from being a wish, to an unwritten will.

"My son, make sure you give me a befitting burial when God decides to take me home," she was quoted as appealing, and sometimes, sounding it like warning

to her son.

But unknown to the great-grand-mother, she will now be the one to bury his son, a 68-year-old man, who was murdered in cold blood in house at about 11.30 pm, on Tuesday, June 23, 2015.

'Youths threatened to kill some people'

FROM PAGE 29

An eyewitness narrated to the reporter, how some unknown gunmen invaded the residence of the late community leader on that fateful day, sprayed bullets on him at a close range, leaving him to writhe on the floor in agony, in the pool of his own blood. Like lightening, the bandits disappeared to the thin air, unchallenged.

And when the rattled and devastated members of the family summoned courage to go to the scene of the dastardly act and rushed the victim, popularly known in the community and beyond as, Dogo to a clinic in Ogbogu for medical attention, there was a stumbling block, as the doctors refused to attend to his medical needs, citing bullet/gun wounds as excuse.

Operators of the Prize Medical Centre demanded and insisted, too, on Police Report before they could treat him. Angry relatives of Chief Arodu were said to have stormed the Egi Police Divisional Headquarters, located at Obite, to lodge formal complaint about the refusal by the hospital management to treat the victim, whose condition was getting from worse to worst.

But it was further gathered that before policemen could arrive the clinic, the victim had passed on. He was said to have been shot on the chest, shoulder, lower abdomen and other parts of his body, which made him to have a very slim chance of survival.

When the reporter visited his family, his relatives, including his senior wife, Mrs. Gold Arodu and his 96-year old mother were still in shock, as the incident still looked to them like a dream.

With tearful, weak eyes, raising her two hands above her shoulders, the victim's mother moaned: "My son who hardly hurt a fly was attacked and killed right in his own room. God shall avenge this evil. This is my son I hoped would give me a befitting burial, when God decides to call me back home."

And to his senior wife, her husband was a peaceful person, who had no problems with anyone, at least, not to her knowledge. She wondered what might have led to his assailants, snuffing life out of the community leader.

Further findings revealed that late chief Arodu was until his gruesome murder, holding brief for his uncle, Elder Benson Nwakaeze – the head and oldest man in Akabuka community – as the Chairman of the Amala (Elders Council) of the community.

By the position, he was responsible for ensuring peace in the community, despite the volatile nature of the area. There had been spate of killings in Egi, neighbouring communities and Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni LGA in general, as a result of the nefarious activities rival cult groups and political thugs.

Further checks revealed that the murder of PDP stalwart may be linked to the crisis in the community. Youths in the community were said to have been fighting over, who becomes the next Youth President.

An impeccable source, who spoke to the reporter at Akabuka on condition of anonymity, disclosed that the Elders Council had reasoned that, for election into the Executive council to be bloodless and without acrimony, there was need to adopt rotational system.

The plan was to zone political positions among the five kindred/family groups in the community, instead of through elections. The Elders council had argued that elections into the leadership of the youth body, have fuelled

crisis among the youths, and served as an avenue for wasteful spending during electioneering campaigns and sundry activities. Also, elections been characterized by violence, resulting in many deaths. According to our source, those were what the Elders Council wanted to prevent, through the proposal of rotation.

But, the reporter gathered the Elders Council's decision did not go down well with some of the youths. Those against this method of choosing the youth leaders had demanded immediate rescission of the directives. The angry youth were alleged to have sent text message(SMS) to some community leaders, threatening to kill those behind the decision. Our source further disclosed that the Ochioha of the community was one of the recipients of the threat SMS; and was said to have brought the matter to the notice of the late Chief Arodu, who persuaded the Elder's council, to yield to the demand of the community youths.

We gathered that the community's Town Crier was mandated to disseminate the information, that the rotation/zoning formula had been jettisoned, directing them(Youths) to revert to the old order. And less than six weeks, Chief Arodu was shot dead.

Another member of the community, who spoke to the reporter, refusing to also disclose his name said the victim stood for truth, fairness, justice and equity, and urged the police to unravel the circumstances that led to the gruesome murder of the respected community leader.

The Rivers State Police Commands is said to have swung into action to unmask those behind the dastardly act, But in what appeared like resigning to fate, the grieving 96-year-old mother muttered to the reporter as she gazed in the empty space: "My only wish now is for the spirit of my son to fight his killers!"