

# LUCKY ESCAPE

...How wife of slain Plateau monarch cheated death  
• Says, 'My hubby was strangled by masked men'

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**SHE** escaped assassin's bullets by the whiskers, but not even the security agencies seemed to have an inkling that she was among victims aboard the ill-fated vehicle in which the paramount ruler of Bokkos in Plateau State, Saf Ron Kulere, Lazarus Amashin Agai, was murdered along with his son, Shagari and three others as she reeled out the casualties.

Police reports said the incident occurred at about 6pm last Monday, when the monarch's vehicle ran into an ambush laid by armed hoodlums whose sporadic firing made the driver to lose control of the vehicle. The vehicle somersaulted into a ditch, leading to the death of four persons including the royal father.

While the victims according to police record included the late Lazarus Agai, his son, Shagari, a police Inspector, AP No. 1800781 Sunday Wuyah, and a lady, Martha Randy, it did not mention the name of the traditional ruler's wife, Mrs. Sabina Agai.

Though she momentarily went blank when she was hit by bullets as a staccato of gunshots rent the air, the 55-year-old queen of Bokkos kingdom, on Thursday, roamed through her mental landscape and introduced a new twist to the circumstances surrounding the death of her husband.

Speaking exclusively to *Saturday Sun* on Thursday at the palace in Bokkos through an interpreter, she said contrary to reports that her husband died after the vehicle was attacked by gunmen and somersaulted into a ditch, he was indeed, strangled to death by masked men while fleeing from his assailants.

Her story: "what happened was that when we were coming back from my husband's village, we had not gone too far when we got to a creek. There is a canal and trees in that area; we started hearing gunshots, but we didn't know where the gunshots were coming from. I was shot twice on my shoulder, you can see the spot.

"The shots persisted and we were trying to run out of the scene; the attackers shot our driver and the car lost control. The next thing we saw was a shot that hit the police orderly with us. Consequently, the car swerved to a point and stopped. We had to come out with my husband and those who were alive and started running towards different direction to escape. My husband took a different route and I realized the people were running after him. They eventually got him and he was killed; they strangled his neck and killed him. We saw their fingers on his neck when they were struggling. I did not know he was dead, because I continued running to escape. The gunshots continued for some time and I hid myself somewhere in the bush because I was tired."



• Queen Agai

## IN THE BEGINNING

Narrating how they began the fatal journey, the queen said "When we took off from the Palace that morning, we did not know that something was going to happen; if we knew, we wouldn't have gone out that day. We had never experienced any incident of such as this, and we had never been attacked. I don't know of any issue that could have led to his being killed."

The queen said she could not identify the attackers because some of them were wearing masks. "I didn't see their faces, so I cannot say these are the people; but I saw some people after we had climbed the hill because the place was a sloppy area and there is a forest and a river. I saw two people wearing black jackets and they covered their faces; they are tall and were running inside the bush.

"My husband is known for peace and justice; I personally do not know him with dubious characters and he easily forgave when he was wronged. I will continue to remember him for his integrity; he was so dear to me, now, I have lost him. I will continue to pray for his soul to rest in peace.

"I do not have knowledge of anybody or group of people who were after his life; my husband had departed this sinful world. I will continue to pray for him so that God in His infinite mercies, will forgive him of any sin he had committed before his death; I will miss him."

## 3 BOKKOS TRADITIONAL RULERS KILLED IN 6 MONTHS

The curtain closed at dawn on Thursday, in Bokkos, Plateau State,

when his subjects, including aged women, men, and children, felt the reality of the demise of the paramount ruler of the area. They were all enveloped in grief and agony, because three of their royal fathers had been cruelly sent to their graves within a space of six months.

First, it was the Makai Forof, Dah Ali Magaji, who was killed in January 2016; but before the dust settled, the district head of Manguna, Saf Anjong Adake, who doubled as the secretary to the council of chiefs in Bokkos Local Government Area, was cruelly dispatched to his untimely death. Then, the harbingers of death haunted down Da Lazarus Agai, 76, the longest serving traditional ruler in Plateau State and paramount ruler of Bokkos, on Monday, April 18.

Speculations were rife that his killing might not be unconnected with the insistence by the Fulani residents in Plateau State, to be recognized and duly registered as bonafide indigenes of the state.

It was learnt that the Fulani had long struck a deal to be accorded indigenization status in the state until the administration of the incumbent chairman of Bokkos Local Government Council, Luka Makut.

Saturday Sun further gathered that a week before Agai was murdered, Makut allegedly approached the slain monarch in company of a delegation of Fulani representatives in Bokkos, expressing their displeasure over the cancellation of the privilege of indigenization hitherto accorded them in the council.

Youths in Bokkos, who had been briefed of the unfolding scenario, barricaded the council headquarters at about 9am, Thursday, obstructing human and vehicular traffic. Visitors not known to them were not allowed to access the community.

It was bedlam as the rampaging youths blocked major roads with dangerous weapons, including machetes, cudgels and logs of wood. It took Plateau State Police commissioner, Adekunle Oladunjoye, over 25 minutes to calm down the irate youths. In an attempt to restore normalcy, security operatives drafted to the community to restore order, allegedly shot dead four youths and injured three.

Oladunjoye was literally compelled to disembark from his decoy police van, but eventually succeeded in addressing the youths on the need for understanding between the police and youths.

Interestingly, it took the maverick efforts of a middle-aged physically challenged person to calm frayed nerves and allow the police chief a smooth passage.

However, at about 9:45am, the Deputy Inspector General of Police, Joshak Habila, arrived the scene in a police chopper. His arrival attracted residents, who tramped out from their homes to catch a glimpse of the messenger of peace.