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The late Emmanuel Nwokoye

71-yr-old man strangled while asleep

— 11th September 2016

...DSS frees suspects

From Aloysius Attah, Onitsha

Like a thick dark cloud at noon, sorrow has descended on the home of Pa Emmanuel Nwokoye of Obuofia village, Mbaukwu, Awka South Local Government Area, Anambra State, following his gruesome murder. Pa Nwokoye, aged 73, a renowned palm wine tapper, who lived peacefully with his wife and children in Umunya, Oyi Local Government Area of the state, was strangled to death while he was asleep. Though an average income earner, Nwokoye was a very popular man in Umunya where he resided in all the productive years of his life and only visited his hometown,

Mbaukwu, occasionally. On August 2, he was seen heading to his village on a routine visit. But villagers were shocked when he was discovered the next morning stone dead in his living room with his legs and hands tied with a wrapper and a pillow lying on his chest, probably used to suffocate him to death. Narrating how his father was gruesomely murdered, the first son, Charles Nwokoye while struggling to hold back tears told Sunday Sun that he was yet to understand why his father should be killed just like that. "I just got a call from my town people summoning me to the village for an emergency meeting. I was wondering what could be amiss because my father who went to the village was very hale and hearty when he left home. "I got home and was confronted with sullen faces in our compound until when I entered the room and saw my father lying still with his hands and legs tied. Oh what a wicked act! Nobody deserves to die that way," he lamented. Charles told Sunday Sun that the villagers gathered in their compound while the traditional ruler of Mbaukwu community, Igwe Peter Anugwu invited men of the Department of State Security, in Awka on phone, who visited the scene while the police also came and took the corpse to the mortuary. Sunday Sun gathered that the village women from Mbaukwu later took to the streets in a peaceful protest over the murder, calling for adequate security of lives and property in the community. Meanwhile the traditional ruler and elders made their best efforts to calm down the restive youths of the community who were visibly angry over the horrendous incident.

Suspects arrested, released

Sunday Sun gathered that based on preliminary inquiries, the DSS arrested one man from the community (name withheld). Sources told the reporter that the man had issues with the late Nwokoye over a tenant who previously lived in Nwokoye's house. Preliminary report also stated that the same man was spotted leaving the deceased Nwokoye's compound early morning of the day the deceased was murdered, but to the surprise of the community members, he and the others arrested were released after being detained for a few days. The Chief Security Officer of Mbaukwu community, Bernard Okeke when contacted by the reporter expressed surprise too on the hasty manner the suspects were released. At the time of filing this report, he said he had no further information regarding the extent of the investigation so far carried out over the death of Nwokoye but expressed deep sadness over the criminal act.

Wife demands justice

When the reporter visited Nwokoye's homestead in Umunya community last week, the wife, Martha was expectedly in sorrow and anguish. The woman who had been bedridden for some years after suffering a partial stroke, cut the picture of a woman with heavy laden heart. She recounted how her husband of over 35 years bade her goodbye as he embarked on the journey to their hometown only to get there and meet his death. Her words: He carried some plantain suckers which he intended to plant in our compound in the village. He also went to the bank to withdraw money because he engaged block moulders for a building project in the village. He was supposed to return on Friday, but I didn't see him that day, only that I noticed unusual movement by my children. When I demanded to know what was going on, they told me that we would go to Awka. "I find it difficult to walk or even sit properly because of my sickness but they managed to carry me to Awka. When we got there, I was told that my husband had been murdered in our house. They told me that his body had already been taken to the mortuary at Awka. I wept profusely. We stayed for over three hours at the police station in Awka before they told us to go home. "Right now, I'm so angry and confused because I don't know who to turn to for help or who will save me from this nightmare. My husband cannot just die like that and the people who killed him are allowed to go scot-free. I heard that the suspects earlier arrested were released, but the security agencies should go the extra mile to unravel the mystery behind his death, arrest the killers and ensure that justice is done." Mrs Nwokoye also lamented that what pains her most is that her husband was never sick and to the best of her knowledge, had never offended anybody to warrant being killed in a most callous manner by some heartless people. She said that she is aware that based on the reality of death, her husband cannot come back to her again alive but reiterated that only when justice is done that the heart can have rest. While commenting on the matter, the immediate past President-General of Mbaukwu Town Union, Chief Omife. I. Omife, urged all the relevant security agencies to spread their dragnet wide towards ensuring that the perpetrators of the criminal act are apprehended and made to face the full wrath of the law. He lamented that this was the first time somebody would be killed in such manner in Mbaukwu and said that it is only

when the killers are caught that such evil can be cleansed from the community. Anambra State Police Public Relations Officer, Nkeiruka Nwode, an Assistant Superintendent of Police, when contacted over the matter said the police was still investigating the murder.

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