

BLUE MURDER

By NGOZI UWUJARE

THE murder of 61-year-old Nanyat Wuyep Gwali, a retired Assistant Controller General of Prison, was no mystery to members of his family and neighbours as accusing fingers were readily pointed at Alhaji Tumbo Banki, the man with whom he had a feud in the last few months of his life. Detectives from the State Criminal Investigation Department have since "through intelligence" arrested the suspect.

The misunderstanding between Banki and the deceased arose from the former's cows rampage on the latter's farm, for which Gwali had demanded compensation. Inability to reach a compromise had turned the issue into a bitter feud between the two parties. In his final weeks, Gwali had reportedly spoken about threats to his life.

A shocking murder

Gwali was murdered in his house at Laminga in Nasarawa Local Government Area on August 10, 2018. His daughter, 14-year-old Tenwa Gwali relived the tragedy of that fateful day.

"My dad had gone to visit his friend in Keffi and we waited for him to arrive. He got back home around 9:45 pm. I heard his car horned, which was an indication for me to open the gate. I went out and opened the gate and he drove in. I was at the gate when I heard a gunshot. I ran back into the house and I saw him in a pool of blood. I quickly called his orderly, Adamu Aguzaidu who reported the case at Laminga Police Station".

She continued: "It is still a shocker to me that my dad was killed right inside our compound. We knew of his misunderstanding with one Alhaji Banki whose cow destroyed his farm and the man's refusal to pay for the damages. My father later spoke about the man threatening him."

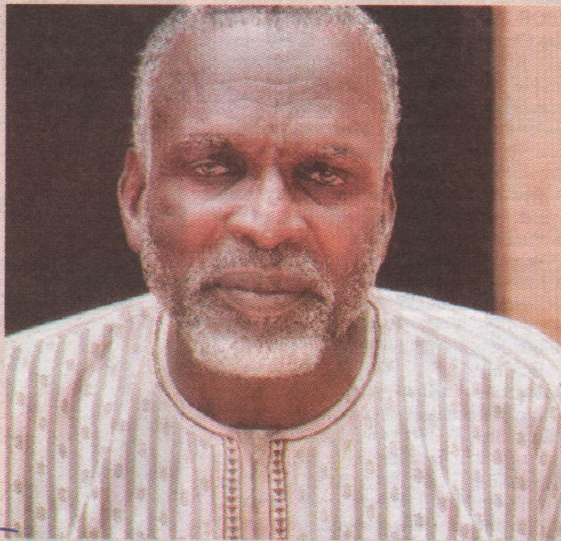
The brother of the deceased, Dalenya Takbal, also corroborated the story about the rancour between his brother and "one Alhaji whom his cow damaged his farm but refused to compensate him and was later threatening him."

Said Takbal: "We suspected the Alhaji to be the killer of my brother. We want justice to be done."

Facts from police's log

According to Nasarawa State Commissioner of Police, Mr Yahaya Bello, the deceased had lodged complaints to the community's elders of how a cow belonging to Alhaji Tumbo Banki had ravaged his farm. Tumbo,

Ex-Prison Controller killed for demanding compensation over destruction of his farm by cows



SUSPECT: BANKI



THE LATE RTD. PRISON CONTROLLER

who had promised to pay Gwali a compensation of N150, 000, at first, gave him N80, 000 but refused to pay the balance and after defaulting for several months, the deceased returned his N80, 000.

Subsequently, the situation deteriorated between them to the extent that the deceased had informed his family members about the suspect threatening his life, and within a week, he was murdered right in his compound.

Commissioner of Police Bello added that Banki, the suspect, is notorious as a troublemaker in Laminga community. He is reported to have fought and threatened the local vigilante group in the area. He also has cases pending in the High Court in Lafia.

The suspect's defence

"It is true that my cow damaged the farm of the deceased," Alhaji Tumbo Banki, the suspect, told *Saturday Sun*.

"We agreed that I should pay N150, 000 for the damages. I sent N80, 000 to him but I didn't pay the balance. One day, he sent for me and returned the N80, 000. We have been having a misunderstanding since."

He insisted: "I didn't know who killed him. I am loyal to him. I am not aware of his killing."

Banki, who had his lawyers around him, insisted that the case is still under investigation.

The remains of Gwali, who retired from Nigeria Prison Service in 2015, was buried on August 30, in his town at Langtang Local Government Area, Plateau State.

The solemn occasion, witnessed by *Saturday Sun*, recorded a huge turnout of families, friends, and well-wishers who paid their last respect to the deceased whom they considered "an honest and humble man."

One of the youth leaders, Amos Habila said: "The Langtang community has lost a great man. While he was in service, he recruited some youths into the Nigeria Prison Service. We are proud to him."

Habila added: "We want justice to be done on this case; we don't want this case to be swept under the carpet. The Inspector General of Police should be aware that the whole world wants to know the outcome of this case."