

A widow's agony: My innocent son was murdered in cold blood

•Tears, as Imo community mourns young man killed during Lagos protest

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Stanley Uzoaru, Owerri

At Umuezu, Ndegwu, in Owerri West Local Government Area of Imo State, the people are still in total shock over the murder of one of their promising sons, Onyekachi Francis Ajaero.



Some EndSARS protesters in Lagos

Ajaero, it was gathered, was allegedly shot dead by a security man in Ajegunle, Lagos, on October 20 during the #EndSARS protest.

Akube, as his friends popularly called him, was a 30-year-old man who, until his death, ran a boutique in Ajegunle, Ajeromi-Ifelodun Local Government Area of Lagos State. Unfortunately, that was where he also met his untimely death.

Friends and relations were all gathered to pay him their last respects on Saturday, November 7, at his country home, Umuezu, where he was laid to rest.

If tears could raise the dead, Onyekachi would have risen with the avalanche of tears that flowed like a torrential rainfall. It was a very sad day in his community as old and young people abandoned their daily activities to accord him their last respects.

Elder brother of the deceased, Ifeanyi Ajaero, narrated to our correspondent how Onyekachi died. According to him, that fateful day, the deceased had gone to his shop as usual but later got a call from his mother, urging him to lock up his shop and go back home. His mother reportedly told him that some security men were patrolling the area, arresting and assaulting protesters.

He reportedly locked his shop but then remembered he had to deliver to his mother her daily drugs. He then took the other end of his street, since he was told the armed security men were approaching from the main artery. Ifeanyi said the decision resulted in tragedy, as he allegedly met face to face with the security men. He said the security men, upon sighting the him, opened fire and shot him at close range. The bullet hit close to his scrotum, it was learnt.

"When they shot him, he did not die on the spot. There were some other people and bodies in their vehicle. When they noticed he did not die, they left him.

"He was there for minutes, but everybody was afraid to come out. He continued writhing in pain until some moments later when the security men were no longer in sight. He was then rushed to several hospitals, but none of them allowed us to bring him in. We finally took him to a hospital far away from the scene, but it appeared we arrived late as the doctor told us he had lost so much blood. That was where he died," he said.

His mother, Mrs. Janet Ajaero, told the reporter that she never believed that she would be alive today, following the complications she had during the birth of Onyekachi.

Her words: "I almost died, and the doctors had almost given up on me, Onyekachi was not like any of my babies. I had several complications. It took me days to finally deliver him. On that day, I fainted, and the doctors thought I was dead. But, thank God, I'm alive today; that was when I knew he was going to be a great child."

She said she had to struggle to send her children to school, as her husband died when the children were very young. The deceased was also helpful in training his siblings in school, she added.

"When my husband died, little or nothing was left for us to feed on, let alone for my children's education. But Onyekachi sacrificed his ambition of being a well-known entrepreneur for his elder brother and his siblings. His elder brother was able to go to a higher institution while he, Onyekachi went to learn a trade.

"Onyeka was God-fearing and loved by my other children. He would have loved to attend a higher institution, but I could not see him and his other brothers and sister through, so decided that he was going to learn a trade.

"He was almost fulfilling his dream. He was doing well in his fashion business, and he was helpful at home. We depended on him, but that did not bring down his business as he kept on expanding.

"During his last visit to the village, he told me that he would like to take his business to Imo and I encouraged him. During the visit, he bought a piece of land for that purpose but it's a pity he did not live longer to actualise his dream."

She also stated that the deceased was a source of strength to her.

"Why did they kill my joy? The reason for my being alive is dead. He always bought my drugs for me, so that I would not die. He was on his way to get my drugs for me when he was killed. What am I going to do now that he is dead," the distraught mother lamented.