



Day Okigwe honoured Okewulonu, ex-senatorial candidate

By Cletus Amaechi

It was celebration all the way on Sunday, October 17, 2021, as the people of Okigwe, Imo State, honoured their own, Chief Emmanuel Okewulonu. He was People Democratic Party (PDP) candidate in the last Imo North Senatorial by-election.

Former governor Emeka Odiako, PDP state chairman, Chief C.C. Ugwu, Okigwe zonal chairman,

Chief Chudi Dike and party youths were among many others present.

Okewulonu vowed to continue to serve his people for as long as he is in politics. "The masses are the reason for my being in politics. It is my duty to serve them."

"As we move forward, I will always ensure I have the masses at heart. They are the reason for my sojourn into politics. At all times, I will always fight for their interest."

He said the reception came as a

surprise to him, and appreciated the leadership of the PDP in the zone and the state. "I feel elated at the rousing welcome given to me by the good people of Okigwe Zone."

"I never expected it to be this huge. I am very grateful to everyone who ensured this happened. I want to appreciate our party, the PDP, the leadership for this great event."

"My special appreciation goes to the former governor of Imo State, Emeka Odiako. I appreciate his support at all times."

The reception also witnessed the presentation of gifts to Okewulonu by Ugwu and Dike.

Witchcraft justice

■ Ebonyi community kinsmen kill businessman over sorcery, transfer N5m from victim's account

From Wilson Okereke, Afikpo

A recent incident at Oha-Echara village of Iyere community in Ezza North Local Government Area of Ebonyi State has left several residents bewildered and tongues wagging. In what looked like an episode in a horror film, some kinsmen on August 28, 2021, allegedly killed Okechukwu Nweke, 51, over allegations of witchcraft. He was accused of having a hand in the string of misfortunes that befell the village.

Some of Okechukwu's kinsmen were alleged to have dragged him from the banks of Akadoro River, where he had gone to observe his prayers as Sabbatharian. The victim, a patent medicine dealer at Ogbu Ogbu Market, Onitsha, Anambra State, had earlier returned home to see his parents.

Being a staunch member of Sabbath Church, he dressed in his religious uniform (red garment) and left for prayers at the bank of the river within the village. As the spiritual exercise was going on, some indigenes of the area saw him and mistook the prayer for ritual activity. They immediately grabbed Okechukwu and demanded for explanations. Okechukwu's plea and explanations fell on deaf

ears. The suspected killers who were already handy with planks, ropes and whips did not listen to the deceased. Rather, he was tied and dragged to the village square where the torturing was intensified until he was beaten to a pulp.

It was learnt that his killers eventually threw him into the water. They came back to the village claiming that upon reaching the Akadoro River, the victim slipped off their hands and fell inside.

Okechukwu's bereaved father, Oliver Nweke, told *Daily Sun* that on the particular day, his son was bullied by the people for eight hours at Oha-Echara village square in their bid to extract incriminating information from him but all through, he insisted on his innocence.

"While the people were torturing my son, still he kept on begging and explaining to them that he never for once conceived evil in his mind against anybody or group of

persons let alone executing such. But the men did not relent in their dehumanizing treatment until after they had found that Okechukwu was at the point of death. They took him to Akadoro River where he was thrown inside water."

"They killed my son as a result of envy. He was neither a ritualist nor a thief. He was a businessman in Onitsha and known member of Sabbath Church. During my son's travail, our traditional ruler, Eze Chris-



Okechukwu Nweke during his travail

topher Ode, even directed that he should be taken to the police. The people agreed but refused to adhere to the instruction.

"Our councillor also suggested that my son should be handed over to the police. After they had gone out of the Eze's palace, they tied him with rope and threw him into the river. As I speak now, his lifeless body has not been recovered."

A resident, Igwe Unata, condemned the killing of Okechukwu. "There was no evidence to prove that the victim was responsible for the misfortunes and mysterious deaths that had befallen the village as his accusers claimed. He was a known businessman who had never been indicted in any evil act in Iyere community. I plead for justice over the matter to forestall future occurrence."

Eze Ode confirmed that the incident took place on Saturday, August 28, 2021, and that he had listened to the people, and advised that the young man be taken to the police. He added that he urged the youths to stop torturing Okechukwu when they brought him to his palace.

"I even sent our councillor to make sure that my instruction was carried out. Therefore, if anything terrible happened to the boy, those responsible for such action should answer for it, that's my stand."

However, there seems to be a twist in the whole episode. The victim's elder sister, Mrs Ngozi Nweke, alleged: "Those who took my brother away later came back and handed over his phone and wallet to me but withheld his UBA ATM card. Unfortunately, some days after the incident, I noticed that about N5 million had been withdrawn from his bank account through transaction alerts which I got from his phone."

Like her aged father and other members of the community, she wanted the suspected killers of Okechukwu to be apprehended and made to face the law. She lamented that the incident has crippled their family.

Repeated attempts to make the Ebonyi State Police Command speak on the issue were rebuffed. However, state branch of Human Rights Defenders (HURIDE), vowed to get to the root of the matter: "No one has the right to take the life of another without legal recourse."

Its chairman, Sampson Oke Nweke, said: "In this case, the law must be allowed to take its stand." He said the group petitioned Commissioner of Police, Aliyu Garba, who approved the petition and directed the relevant department to commence investigation.



Okechukwu