

# The Lifeline

## Widow in agony, tears

• Son abducted 2 years after hubby, brother in-law were killed, family house burnt

By Samuel Udofo

**THESE** are certainly not the best of times for Mrs. Elizabeth Rosemary Iyoha, a widow and mother of three. She is in sorrow over recent happenings in her family.

In the beginning, her family was a happy one but things have fallen apart. Elizabeth has been shattered by the recent abduction of her son, Emmanuel Iyoha.

On his way from church service in Uromi, Esan Local Government Area of Edo State, on Sunday, June 11, 2022, Emmanuel was abducted by gunmen suspected to be militants and no contact has been made so far.

Ironically, Elizabeth just marked the second anniversary of the death of Mr. Moses Lawrence Iyoha, her husband, who suffered a similar fate. On Tuesday, March 10, 2020, her husband was abducted and he died in the hands of the



• Emmanuel

abductors.

She recounted how the criminals



• Mrs. Iyoha

stormed their house in the early hours of that faithful day, shot randomly and

searched everywhere. They specifically requested for information regard-

"With some, tears are visible; with others, tears are invisible." - J. Shep Jeffreys

ing the whereabouts of her second son, Augustine Akhabue Iyoha.

She said: "They warned that if we failed to give them Augustine's information, we risked losing my husband and every other member of the family, as they dragged my husband along with them.

"By that time, we didn't know Augustine's whereabouts and what transaction bonded them together. However, there was a twist in the abductors' sudden demand of N30 million ransom to affect the release of my husband after three weeks in their camp without his BP drugs. We requested to speak with him on phone first before the payment of the ransom but, instead, they threatened to come after other family members. That was when we feared that the worst may have happened.

"We have heard stories where ransoms were paid, yet the victims still get killed or were dead before the demand for ransoms were made."

Elizabeth stated that the family house at Ohe, Uru, in Esan Central Local Government Area of Edo State, where Augustine was living with his late uncle, Chief Josiah Iyoha, at the time that was gutted by fire in 2017 with sporadic shooting, was suspected to have been connected to this same criminal group.

She said that Chief Josiah, who arrived at the scene of the fire, slumped

and before any help could be given, he died. And the house was razed to ashes.

According to her, "with this recent abduction of Emmanuel, they have succeeded in destroying my miserable life. My heart is shattered. My family that used to be a happy home is now in turmoil.

"Long before Augustine finally disappeared, we noticed that he was always hiding. He stopped coming out to public places. He started keeping to himself and this persisted until he left without contact."

Elizabeth is questioning the hope of ordinary citizens of Nigeria who are more affected by the killings: "I have seen videos of many prominent leaders in Nigeria like a governor who said he knows the camps, has the phone numbers and listens to the conversations of the bandits who cause this havoc but can't neutralize them.

"Who can be trusted? We heard the testimony of the Methodist Church Prelate who was kidnapped at Lokpanta, Abia State. He alleged that the non-indigene soldiers were protecting the kidnappers. He said that some of the soldiers were only interested to know how much ransom was paid to know how much they were entitled to collect. We can go on talking about this but the government has failed to address this while people are suspected to be paying taxes to criminals to stay alive."