

ABATETE

HOW ANAMBRA TAX FORCE SHOT, KILLED MY HUSBAND

-Heartbroken 23-year-old mother of 3

■ They killed him because he was wearing his mechanic black attire
-Brother ■ Mother, wife, kids, others lament, demand justice

From **Obinna Odogwu,**
Awka

THESE are not the best of times for Mrs Helen Udo, a widow from Achailla Agbaja, Abatete in Idemili North Local Government Area of Anambra State, and the members of her family.

Exactly one month after she lost one of her sons to the cold hands of death, security operatives allegedly murdered another. That was on June 20, this year.

The deceased Uchenna, according to the family, got a call from someone to come and fix their car that broke down as he was a mechanic. It was on his way to see the client that the security operatives on patrol attacked him.

The family told Sunday Sun that the security operatives killed the father of three and set his motorcycle ablaze. They also alleged that his phone and the sum of N280,000 they found on him were taken away.

Bloody Monday afternoon

In the Southeast and some parts of the South-south regions, particularly those in the states that made up the defunct Biafra Republic from 1967-1970, some people still observe the every Monday sit-at-home order originally declared the leadership of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB).

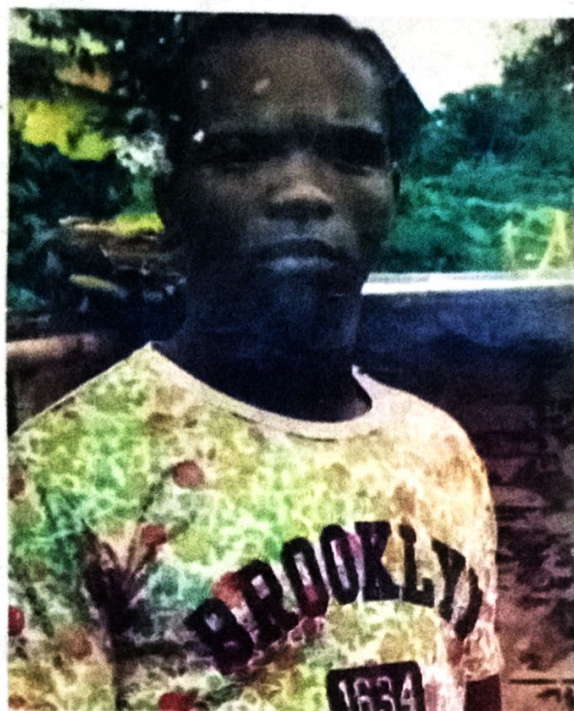
Although IPOB had cancelled the declaration, telling the people to go about their normal businesses, some people still observe it as the order has been hijacked by miscreants.

So, on that fateful Monday, the 25-year-old mechanic stayed back in his house with his family, enjoying the love, warmth and excitement that come with it not knowing that death was lurking.

His wife, Chinenye, 23, told Sunday Sun that her husband left their house around 3:00p.m to meet a client. She said that Uchenna left with his tools box and the money he was supposed to give his mother later that day.

"We were at home on Monday, the 20th of June. Somebody called my husband on the phone around some minutes to 3:00p.m. The person told him that their vehicle broke down somewhere, asking him to come and repair it.

"I was cooking at that time. So, he told me he was going there. He gave me the sum of N280,000 to keep for him. It was the money he wanted to give his mother. So, while he was about to leave the house, he asked me for it. He left the house with it.



• Late Uchenna Udo



• Mrs Chinenye Udo, wife of the deceased.



• Mrs Helen Udo, mother of the deceased.

"He told me to prepare the children, that all of us would go together when he returned so that the children could write their homework. After a short while, my sister and her husband came to our house and told me that they were trying to call my husband, but his number wasn't going through.

"I told them his whereabouts based on the call he received. While they were still in my house, my co-wife came and told me that my husband's mother was sick, that

she had been taken to the hospital. They didn't tell me what actually happened.

"So, they told me to prepare, let's go. By that time, I had finished preparing the children, but I was yet to take my own bath. But they told me to prepare like that, let's go.

"When we got to my husband's house, so many people were already there. It was there that I was told that security men working for Soludo killed my husband. I was shocked because it wasn't long he left home

to repair someone's vehicle.

"I didn't see his corpse. They said that the youths have carried it. They said that they were protesting with his body. I was still crying when they returned with his corpse.

"I was told that the security people set his motorcycle ablaze. He also went out with his toolbox, battery and phone. Till today, we are yet to be given his phone. We have not seen any of the items he left the house with. They also took his money.

"Youths said that the security people first shot him in the hand. They said that he was begging them, telling them that he was a mechanic. He was a well known mechanic in this Abatete. He was even the one repairing our local security people's vehicle."

The 23-year-old mother told Sunday Sun that she trained as a hairstylist, but was yet to start her own business as her late husband was planning to open and equip a shop for her before his life was cut short.

"These are all his children: one boy and two girls. The boy is six years old while the girls are four years and a year plus respectively. The boy is supposed to graduate from nursery three this month", Chinenye narrated.

The young mother said that life had been hard for them ever since the tragedy struck. She said that her children have been asking her of the whereabouts of their father.

Her words: "Since this incident happened, my children and I have been sick. This morning, I was given an injection. This smaller one was given drip and blood. They have been crying since, asking about their father. I keep telling them that he went to work, that he would come back.

"Anytime somebody comes around with a car, they would rush to it, thinking that it was their father. Their father used to drive. When they see a different person, they would return to the house hoping that he would return someday.

"So, we have been managing since then. My husband was the breadwinner in this family and has been the one providing everything."

Allegation of cultism

The killers of Uchenna reportedly labelled him a cultist. But this allegation was dismissed by his wife and mother. The duo said that the deceased was never a cultist and had never engaged in any cult related activities.

Chinenye said: "My husband is

not a cultist. Since we got married, I have never seen him partake in any cult related activities. He has never behaved as one. He was always at his shop located in front of the church at Eke Agu, Christ De King."

Uchenna's mother, Helen, corroborated her claims, saying that she could vouch for her son anytime, anywhere.

She said that the security operatives were not telling the truth.

"I can swear that my son was not a cultist. My son was easy going and was never known as a troublemaker. He has his mechanic workshop. Some people have declared that they were ready to swear that he was not a cultist", she stated.

The 58-year-old mother told Sunday Sun that the deceased was the breadwinner of the family and had been the one paying her medical bills. She lamented that she had been devastated ever since the incident happened.

"I am just coming back from where I went to beg someone for money. His son will be graduating from nursery school and we needed to buy some things including new clothes for him. We've not eaten since morning", she lamented.

The last conversation

That fateful day, Mrs Udo told Sunday Sun that she spoke with her son on phone earlier in the morning and told him that her drugs had finished. She said that they equally discussed other pressing issues.

Hear her: "That Monday morning, I called my son, Uchenna, on the phone. He normally doesn't come out on Mondays because of the sit-at-home order. He was a mechanic. He often called his brothers, asking them if they sat at home.

"So, that Monday morning, I called him on the phone. After exchanging pleasantries, I told him that my medicine for High Blood Pressure (HBP) had finished. So, he told me that he would bring money for it while coming in the evening.

"He was supposed to bring money for me that same evening for the repair of our leaking roof. You see that small house over there, that's where they normally stay anytime they come around.

"So, he told me that he would bring the money in the evening. After that, I left for my farm. While still in the farm, my grandchild and I joined others to say the divine mercy prayers at 3:00p.m.

"After that, we left for home. By that time, we had already started

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