

# Quarry of death

■ Mine brings sorrow to Ebonyi community, kills pregnant mother of 3

28th September 2022 in oriental news

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Location where Mrs Lucy Ebonyi was submerged

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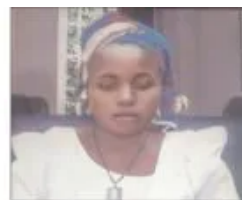
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From **Wilson Okereke**, Afikpo

**Ordinarily, mining activities should be a blessing to any endowed community. But this has not been the case with Ezza Inyimagu community, Izzi Local Government, Ebonyi State. Mining has continued to bring sorrow and pain to the area.**

Every year, indigenes die in the mining site for inexplicable reasons.

The latest being on June 17, 2022, when a pregnant woman and mother of three, Mrs Lucy Chinyere Ebonyi, lost her life in a landslide that occurred at the mining site. Her bereaved husband, Patrick, has also developed an ailment suspected to be stroke.



-Late Ebonyi



-Mr. Ebonyi

Our reporter who visited the area was told that the mine claims lives of villagers yearly due to the crude manner of operation. Locals who work there to eke a living are exposed to all forms of risks including working without protective equipment. Friday Nwokoro and Chidi Nwogudu were two of the persons killed in the pit in the past.

Daily Sun gathered that Lucy was killed by large quantity of earth crust that fell off the mine. Her sick husband said he never envisaged any misfortune that fateful day until around afternoon when sympathizers trooped into his compound. They told him that his wife of about 32 years was smashed to death in the mine.

He disclosed that the deceased was his third wife. She was not the only casualty in his family. Two of his sons from the other wives,

Amos and Chinonso, with his grandchild, Shedrack, equally sustained various degrees of injuries. Fortunately, they survived through divine intervention.

“It was also gathered Chisom Ofoke, an 11-year-old boy from the neighbouring village of Agbaenyim in Mgbalukwu Inyimagu, died on the spot in the same incident. He said such incident was commonly experienced in the mines in their village during rainy season.

He appealed to relevant government agencies to intervene to forestall future occurrence, calling for assistance to enable him mitigate the situation: “Presently, I am down with stroke which has automatically deteriorated my condition from bad to worst.

“How to treat myself and cater for the bereaved children has become an illusion in my life. This is why I am requesting for help from good spirited individuals.”

A mineworker at the site who spoke under anonymity said government had a duty to ensure best practices there. He alleged that their people were being enslaved. He urged government to direct the mechanisation of the mining process there by providing excavators and other necessary machineries, rather than abandoning miners with the crude method of digging stones with pickaxes, diggers and the use of big hammers for breaking rocks.

The miner claimed that the place was a major revenue earner for the government. A tipper driver pays N1,600 into government account per trip: “Government is highly interested in the proceeds from the mining activities. But when misfortune occurs, both the community and the victims will be abandoned to their fate. This is why we are calling on the officials to come to our aid to prevent future occurrence.”

A key stakeholder in the area when approached declined to disclose the arrangement between his community and government on how a similar incident could be halted. He said his reaction could attract negative action from the government.

Commissioner for Solid Minerals, Chris Uchaji, also declined to comment on the issue.