

The Lifeline

Heart-rending crimes in Plateau

From **Gyang Bere**, Jos

PLATEAU State woke up on January 1, 2022, with a heart-rending story of how a 300-Level student of the University of Jos, Jennifer Anthony, was allegedly killed by her 20-year-old boyfriend, Moses Oche, for rituals.

Her mutilated body was discovered at a guest house in Jos, along Zaria Road, on New Year's day, with some of her body parts, including her eyes, missing.

Jennifer, an undergraduate student of the Department of Special Education and Rehabilitation Science, University of Jos, was invited from Abuja to Jos by her boyfriend for New Year celebration. She was lured to the hotel, drugged and killed while the alleged boyfriend fled from the hotel.

The suspect, Oche, was later arrested at a psychiatric home in Benue with the help of his father, Joseph Oko, a lecturer at the University of Jos, and paraded at the Plateau State Police Command, Jos.

Commissioner of Police Bartholomew Onyeka, said: "Sequel to the gruesome murder of Miss Jennifer Anthony, a 300-level student of the University of Jos whose lifeless body was found mutilated on January 1, 2022, by a man, Mose Oche, aged 20, suspected to be her boyfriend who fled after committing the crime.

"In a bid to arrest the perpetrator, the police launched an aggressive manhunt for the suspect and tactically trailed him to Benue State, where he was arrested by hawk-eyed police operatives of the command."

Oche has been arraigned in court and the case is ongoing with a view to get justice for the deceased.

One month after, precisely on February 1, 2022, 31-year-old Samson Eze was arrested for killing tricycle riders and dumping the corpses into a septic tank in an uncompleted house.

Eze, a resident of Kampala in Jos North Local Government Area of the state, confessed to the crime and said he chattered tricycles to his house and killed the owners to take possession of their tricycles.

He blamed his year-long killing spree on the current hardship in the country. He said: "I started committing this crime sometime in December 2021. At about 7pm, I boarded a motorcycle at Agingi to take me to my brother's house located in the area.

"When we got close to the house, I



•The late Jennifer Anthony and Moses Oche

asked him to drop me off. Immediately I dropped, I used a stick I hide inside my jacket to hit him behind his head. When I made sure he was dead, I dragged him into my brother's house and dumped him inside the soak-away pit.

"I took the motorcycle home and used it briefly for commercial purposes but it was not yielding any good money. I returned to the same area sometime in January and boarded another tricycle, when we got to the same spot, I dropped off and used a stick to hit him on the head until he died.

"I deposited his body in the same septic tank and took the tricycle home. I repeated it again after a week and possessed a man of his tricycle but this time the man fought me hard and left plenty of blood marks on the floor.

"After hitting them, I used a polythene bag to wrap their heads to suffocate them and also to prevent blood from dropping on the ground. I thereafter pour a chemical inside the soak away pit to prevent odour from emanating from it which can attract attention."

Eze noted that the house was built by his brother and was uninhabited but he only reared pigs and dogs inside the house. He was arrested on January 22, 2022, with two tricycles, a motorcycle and two military uniforms in his house.

Another agonizing incident was the horrible act committed by one Mrs. Nneanmaka Nwachukwu, who allegedly tortured her housemate, Miss Margaret Joshua, to death at Kwata Zawan in Jos South Local Government Area of

Plateau State.

The 11-year-old girl was allegedly taken by Mrs. Nwachukwu from Kebbi State on account of insecurity to Jos with a promise to cater for her education, welfare and other needs. But the woman could not fulfill her commitment to the family, rather, she took pleasure in beating and assaulting the poor girl until death came her way.

This came into the public domain on November 14, 2022, when a Good Samaritan noticed injuries on Margaret and lodged a complaint at K/Vom Police Station and Mrs. Nwachukwu was arrested and kept behind bars for beating Margaret and forcing her to sit on boiling water.

Margaret was rushed to Mandela



•Eze

Clinic, where she was admitted and later taken to the intensive care unit of the Jos University Teaching Hospital (JUTH) where she was supported immediately with oxygen and later blood transfusion.

But Margaret did not survive the pains and agony meted on her. She gave up the ghost a few hours after she was brought to JUTH. Her death attracted attention from local and international quarters who showed interest in pursuing the case for justice.

Friday September 2, 2022, was another day that cannot be forgotten in a hurry. It was the day that a gambler in the uniform of the Nigerian Security and Civil Defense Corps (NSCD), Napkur Emmanuel Rinkat, allegedly ex-



•Margret Joshua

"Making the decision to have a child is momentous. It is to decide forever to have your heart go walking around outside your body." —Elizabeth Stone

Stakeholders explain why baby factories are booming as police rescue 10 victims in Rivers



Rescued victims

By Ngozi Nwoke and Tony John, Port Harcourt

ON January 7, operatives of C4i Intelligence Unit of the Nigeria Police Force, Rivers State Command, raided suspected baby factories and made arrests. The alleged baby factories were at two different houses in Igwuruta and Omagwa communities, in Ikwerre Local Government Area of the state.

Daily Sun gathered that C4i operatives, who carried the operations at about 4.45pm, following credible intelligence, stormed the spots where victims of child trafficking were kept.

Rivers State police public relations officer, Grace Iringe-Koko, a superintendent of police, said during the raid four suspects were arrested. She said among the suspects were a 40-year-old woman and leader of the child trafficking syndicate, Peace Alkoi, from Igwuruta community, and Favour Bright, 30, from Umudioga community in Emohua Local Government Area of Rivers State.

Two male suspects, 29-year-old Noble Uzuchi, and Chogozie Ogbonna, also 29, were nabbed.

Ten victims were rescued in the operation and they were mostly pregnant. They included Gift Saviour, 19, from Umudioga, in Ikwerre LGA, Joy Monday, 21, from Bumy community, Gokana LGA, Chiagoro Nice, 19, from Ndas, Etche LGA, Precious Kalu, 25, from Umudioga Emohua LGA, and Chika

Nwosa, 15, from Umudioga Emohua LGA, all in Rivers State.

Others victims were Favour Charles, 23, from Abale community in Obingwa LGA of Abia State and Cynthia Ekeh, 27, from Okpuala community Ngor Okpala LGA, Imo State, Blessing Francis, 28, from Ngwa community in Ikot Ekpene LGA, Joy Emmanuel, 29, from Ikot Obiom community in Nsit Ibom LGA, Akwa Ibom State, and Queen Amos, 28, from Owase community in Kwande LGA, Benue State.

Police spokesperson, Iringe-Koko, said investigation into the case so far revealed that when any of the victims delivered, the syndicate's leader would keep the baby. She disclosed that the leader bids the victim N500,000 for a baby.

According to Iringe-Koko, all the victims confessed that they were lured into the illicit sale of children because of the need to meet some financial challenges. Police said they recovered from the syndicate leader a white Honda Pilot Jeep with number, Lagos FST 607AX.

Meanwhile, the case has been transferred to the State CID. The police command said efforts were being intensified to track and arrest the buyers of the children already sold out.

Iringe-Koko said: "The command wishes to reaffirm its commitment to reducing crime and criminality in all its forms to its barest minimum. While painstaking effort is being deployed to ensure the above, members of the public are urged to remain vigilant and report any suspicious activity to the police."

Explaining why baby factories are flourishing, the founder of Little Saints Orphanage Home, Lagos, Rev. Mrs. Dele George, in a phone interview, said: "The baby factory business is booming because a lot of these young girls and women are still vulnerable. It's just like saying before you can stop the dog from eating the meat, you must keep it out of reach."

"The target is teenage girls, especially between the ages of 16 and 25. So long as these teenage girls are on the loose without shelter or care, these baby factory business organisers will still be on the hunt for them and the sad reality is that they always succeed, in most cases."

"You cannot tell a teenage girl or a lady who is homeless, jobless, hungry and without a trace of her family to turn down juicy offers even if they come from

the devil. These baby factory kingpins would always lure their target into the business with attractive and irresistible offers such as promising to give them good shelter, feeding and a good life.

"Some even promise them well paid jobs, only for them to find out that all is false and by the time they discover the truth, it is late for them to back out. As an NGO, we have worked with agencies to rescue these girls and, during our raids, we counsel the girls, who by that time are already six or seven months pregnant, while some are due for delivery."

"So, my thoughts on this issue is that parents, guardians social workers, NGOs and the government must ensure that these teenage girls and women do not remain vulnerable in society for these people to prey on."

Engr. Prosper Okafor, president, Crusade for Greater Nigeria on Poverty Eradication and Social Matters (CFGN), said: "The problem about baby factory is that it is not legalized by the government. My opinion is that baby factories should be legalized and should be monitored and regulated by stakeholders, in collaboration with the Ministry of Women Affairs."

"Everything has its advantages and disadvantages. In this case, these baby factories have brought joy and relief to couples who are unable to bear children. The children are being bought by these couples who raise them and give them a home and future."

"But the disadvantage in this case is also that young girls are deceived into this business. Another disadvantage is that no one checkmates the people who come to buy these children from the factories. We have evil people who have bought these children with the sole intention to use them for ritual purposes."

"Again, there is no synergy between the government and NGOs or stakeholders. These organizations are not carried along during the rescue or sanitization exercises by the government or security agencies. Because at the end of the raids or rescue mission, the big question is, what happens to the young girls and women who are in the situation of becoming mothers? What happens to the men and young boys who impregnated these women and girls? The bottom line is that baby factory business should be legalized and strictly regulated by the government."



•Okafor

hibited inhumanity against woman.

The officer, who was trained to provide security for citizens, allegedly turned terror and flogged an innocent woman, Mrs. Joy Owolabi, for no justification. The armed security officer visited a betting shop close to Mrs. Awolabi's shop around Nanmwa Junction, Abbaioir community, in Jos South Local Government Area of Plateau State, and parked his motorcycle without considering other road users within the vicinity.

He returned again a few days later with his armed colleague and parked the same motorcycle in a similar manner, blocking the entrance to her shop. Mrs. Awolabi approached him and requested that he should repark his motorcycle to make room for easy movement into her shop, but he ignored her for hours while he concentrated on his game. This led to an exchange of hot words.

When he lost the betting game, which he invested heavily in with the hope to make huge returns, he became violent. He allegedly insulted and humiliated the innocent woman. As if that was not enough, he descended on the woman and hit her in the eye with the butt of his rifle. Not yet done, he threw heavy punches at her and she fell to the ground.

The matter was reported to the NSCDC commandant, who identified the officer as Napkur Emmanuel Rinkat but could not resolve the matter amicably. The woman dragged the officer and NSCDC to court where the issue is now being handled.

④ Saturday, December 10, 2022, was another dark day in Plateau. That day, a 32-year-old graduate of the University of Jos, Ruth Yakadi, was allegedly raped to death by suspected cultists and the body dumped near a filling station in Farin-Gada, Jos North Local Government Area.

Ruth was said to be returning home from Rayfield, where she got a new job two weeks before the unfortunate incident. She was murdered about 9pm that fateful Saturday, leav-

ing her family members and associates wailing.

This singular act sent another danger signal to young ladies in the state who have become endangered species since. Immediately the body was discovered the following Sunday, relatives, neighbours and sympathizers, converged at the scene to register their displeasure over the unfortunate incident, but were dispersed by security personnel who took away the body from the scene.

The killing of Ruth generated confusion in the entire Jos North LGA as boys within the suburb insisted on a peaceful protest against the barbaric act. It was observed that Ruth was stripped, with her underwear hanging down her legs, indicating that she had been raped by people suspected to be gunmen or cultists.

Another account said the victim had a disagreement with her boyfriend, a member of a cult group, and he killed her and dumped the body by the roadside. Her body was released on Thursday, December 15 by the police for burial. The remains were laid to rest in her hometown, Rusau village, in Jos North.

Another crime that created anxiety in the state was the brutal murder of a retired naval officer, Mrs. Helen Godos, by suspected kidnappers in Dong community, Jos North Local Government Area of the state.

It was reported that bandits attacked the residence of the deceased on Christmas eve, December 24, 2022 in an attempt to kidnap her son. They shot sporadically into the air to scare residents of the area before proceeding to the residence of the retired squadron leader.

A survivor of the incident revealed that when the gunmen attempted to kidnap the son, the woman started pleading and trying to hold back her son and one of the armed men pulled the trigger and shot her at close range. The retired squadron leader died on the spot and they took away her son.