

SATURDAY *life*

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From OBINNA ODOGWU, Awka

MEMBERS of the senate of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka convened an emergency meeting at the university's auditorium on Thursday, April 13 to discuss an issue of grave importance.

They got a piece of information that rattled them concerning one of their own, Prof Anthony Nweke Eze. That information, which was actually a sad piece of news, was that Eze was murdered in cold blood by yet to be identified assailants.

The varsity senators, who seemed unsure whether to believe that heartrending news or not, convened an emergency meeting to have a headcount of their members.

After an opening prayer and a few remarks by the Vice Chancellor of the university, Prof Charles Esimone, the registrar, Philomena Okoye, began to call out the members who responded to mark their presence.

The fifth person on her list was Prof Anthony Nweke Eze. She called three times but there was no response. It was at that point that it dawned on them that the sad news was true.

Although that list may not be the official register of the members of the university senate, that exercise was rather a tradition usually carried out during valedictory sessions for their deceased members.

With the sad news confirmed to be true, the senate turned Eze's seat, which hitherto faced the audience in the auditorium, to indicate that his services to the university had sadly come to an end.

The VC, Esimone, said that the university actually got the sad news of Eze's demise but could not believe it. He said that the senate and management of the varsity had been in shock over the devastating news.

"We got information a couple of months back that one of us, a very distinguished member of this senate; former Dean, Faculty of Education, professor of very high repute; that this very distinguished professor; a member of this senate is no more.

"This afternoon, we have come here as senators to authenticate this news and in the process, do our own due diligence as required by the tradition of the university; accord him that respect.

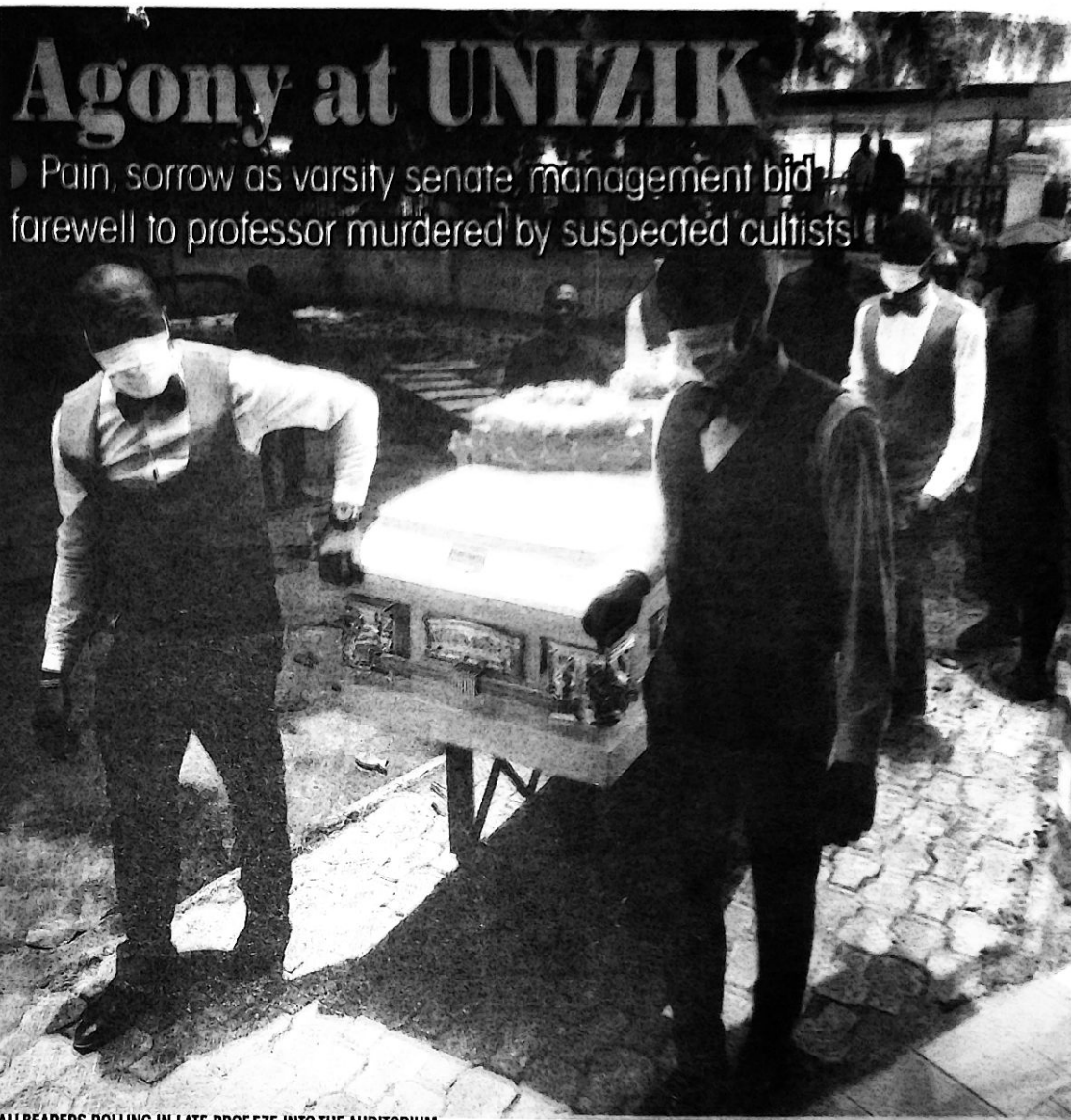
"From the roll call, the registrar has confirmed that Prof Anthony Eze who has, hitherto, been a very active member of this senate is no more", he stated.

While making solemn remarks, Esimone moderated a minute silence observed in honour of the deceased. He also prayed for the peaceful repose of his soul.

"May we all rise, observe a minute of silence, in the process turn his seat to show that he is no more an active member of this senate," he noted.

He then prayed: "The rare gem in the person of Prof Anthony Eze served us, he has served You in the process and they, as senate of the university, symbolised by the turning of the chair backwards to the audience, we are accepting the fact that it has pleased You to call him.

"We pray that You grant us the fortitude to bear his irreparable loss; not just the senate, not just in the faculty, not just his department but the university as a whole.



PALLBEARERS ROLLING IN LATE PROF. EZE INTO THE AUDITORIUM

"But importantly also, the family, the community where he has served as a veritable role model, may we receive grace to bear this great loss. And may You in Your mercy spare us from such news.

"Prof Eze was a man who has touched many lives; played active roles in the affairs of our university and could be described, very correctly, as a person that died in active service."

Eze was reportedly killed on Tuesday, February 7 this year by gun-wielding men suspected to be cultists.

According to a source, he was driving out of his residence at Ifite village, Awka to take his children to school when the gunmen stormed the area and launched an attack on him.

The source, who preferred anonymity, had narrated that the deceased attempted to flee for his dear life but was chased down by the assailants who opened fire on him.

"We were here this morning when Dr Eze was driving out of his house and sud-



UNIZIK VC, PROF. ESIMONE, CONSOLING LATE EZE'S FAMILY