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Soldiers stab man about to wed to death

By Vincent Ukpog Kalu

Saturday, September 8, 2007

Penultimate Thursday was a bad day for the family of Chukwuma David Madu from Nanka, Anambra State. The family would wish that day never existed as their front tooth was forcefully pulled. On this day, Chukwuma was gruesomely murdered on his way from Alaba International Market, Ojo at Onireke by soldiers living in Ojo Military Cantonment. Onireke is opposite the Cantonment.



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Pix: Sun News Publishing

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Cut down in prime

Chukwuma recently had his traditional marriage and the preparation for the church version of the marriage was in top gear.

He had a thriving electrical and electronics accessories business at Alaba International Market, Ojo and Idumota, Lagos Island. He had loaded some goods in his LT Volkswagen van at Alaba with two occupants in front and was driving to the Island not knowing that danger lurked at the corner and at last he was caught in the web of death in a most cruel manner.

He has not been found to have committed any offence against the law, but insyead had complained against what he saw as improper by those that are supposed to keep the rule. As he drove, he overtook a motorcycle whose rider and the

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passenger were in mufti. When he drove to Onireke busstop, the motorcyclist rode recklessly past him and parked right in his way on the road. The man above the law did not stop at that but later came down his bike with his passenger.

Advise that leads to death

Like any motorist would caution another road user against recklessness, when the motorcyclist inquired why Chukwuma nearly hit him, Chukwuma was said to have denied the allegation and pleaded with the cyclist. On a second note, he cautioned that the manner he was riding was not good. This was just the last act that led to his torture and then death.

The cyclist whose name is Raheem Soto who joined the Nigerian Army in 1993 asked him, " Why do you to talk to me like that. Who are you to talk to me like that; don't you know that I am a soldier? " Further pleadings by Chukwuma fell on deaf ears. Like a flash, the soldier brought out a horsewhips and started whipping him.

He beckoned on his colleagues to join in the beating. Four other soldiers answered the call and arrived promptly to be swell the torture squad with military belts, horswhips and other things they could lay hands on. Even as blood gushed out from his head and face, they forcefully pulled him out of the vehicle and increased his punishment. This lasted for almost thirty minutes in the full glare of the public. Some people that were courageous came pleaded with the soldiers to rescind, but were reported to have been cautioned to stay away of face same treatment.

Blood hound takes a soul

Chukwuma being over stretched by the beating and bleeding profusely was ordered to frog-jump. With the little strength left in him as he bent to obey, one of the soldiers named Nuru, who is undergoing training at Ogun State for peacekeeping in Sudan decided to first spill the blood if his fellow Nigerian. He allegedly pulled out his bayonet and plunged it into Chukwuma's back which pierced through his heart and came out at his chest. He died there and then.

Having accomplished their mission and about to escape, the crowd was able to nab two of them, Soto and Nuru while the other three escaped. Soto was first detained at Onireke Police Station and has been transferred to SCID, Pantí, Yaba, while Nuru is being detained by the military at Ojo Cantonment.

Hurting and gory

A young man who witnessed the gory incident could not sleep in the night. According to him, " I had nightmares throughout the night. " How can a person be murdered for cautioning against reckless riding on the highway? Because you are a soldier, nobody has the temerity to caution or talk to you. It was exhibition of highest degree of callousness by the military men who are paid with our tax money to protect us and the country."

Not the first time

A resident of Onireke who also there when the act lasted told Saturday Sun that such an ugly incident had happened in the past. According to him, when there are cases of abuse of civilians by the soldiers and the police arrest such soldiers, their colleagues will troop out from the barracks, invade the police station and intimidate them to release the soldiers. There had been such cases of murder of hapless civilians by soldiers of the same Ojo Barracks in the past", the witness claimed.

Saturday Sun investigation revealed that there are pressures on the police to release the detained soldier at Pantí to face orderly room trial from the Ojo Barracks. According to a competent source, if he is released, the case will end without justice being carried out and the culprit soldiers will walk into freedom. That had done that severally and we know they up to that now"