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Aftermath of Balogun market bloody clash:Our family is ruined

By OBIDIKE JERRY

Saturday, February 9, 2008

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For the family of Chinedu Nwakeze, the trader that was allegedly shot by a mobile policeman during a bloody factional clash at the Balogun Business Association Market in Trade Fair Complex, Badagry, Lagos, day has suddenly turned into night. Chinedu, an orphan from Awkuzu in Oyi Local Government Area, Anambra State was the fourth child in a family of eight.

Their father died on July 10 , 2000 and their mother followed two years later on April 13, 2002. Chinedu, who until his death owned a dress shop at the market, consequently became the bread winner of the family. The burden of sustaining the family particularly the training of his siblings in higher institutions fell on his shoulders.

Dashed hope

According to Ikechukwu Nwakeze, the elder brother of Chinedu who spoke to Saturday Sun, his family is completely devastated as Chinedu was the hope of the family. He said: "We are orphans. We are eight in the family-four boys and four girls. I am the first while Chinedu was the fourth. Two girls are between me and Chinedu. Since we lost our parents, Chinedu has been the bread winner." Ikechukwu, who runs a bar in his Awkuzu town said Chinedu, who would have been 32 years old in March, 2008 gave him the start up capital for his business and contributed immensely to the growth of the business.

Early warning

Ikechukwu revealed that his deceased brother was warned on January 30, 2008 by an undisclosed person through a phone call not to come to market the following day, Thursday, January 31, 2008, as he (Chinedu) was an object of attack since he was a staunch supporter of Prince Tony Akanegbu, the president of Balogun Business Association. As fate would have it, Chinedu ignored the warning hence his death. Ikechukwu said that the story he heard about the cause of his brother's death from an eyewitness was that his brother was clearing the way for Mr. Tony Akanegbu, who had arrived at the venue of the prayer, when one of the mobile police officers present shot him and he died instantly. Ikechukwu further said that his family had written a petition to the Inspector General of Police through the office of Deputy Inspector General of Police "D" accusing police of being responsible for the "gruesome

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murder of Chinedu.” A copy of the petition was made available to Saturday Sun

Cry for help.

The death of Chinedu, according to Ikechukwu, has ruined the family.

The family is crying for justice. With heart full of agony he said:

“Chinedu’s death has created a vacuum in our family. We are poor. I cannot pay the school fees of my junior ones because my business of buying and selling of beer and soft drinks cannot do that. We all know how costly it is to train somebody in higher institution.”

The family calls for justice from government. His words: “We are not happy. We are asking government to come to our rescue. We are crying for justice. We cannot ignore that stupid blunder by the police. I couldn’t recognize my bother at the mortuary because part of his face was blown off. The mortuary attendant had to use thread to hold it.”

When contacted, the police said that the matter is still being investigated. When Saturday Sun spoke with Mr. Olumide, Deputy Police Public Relations Officer on phone, he said the Commissioner of Police, Lagos State has directed the state Criminal Investigation Department (C.I.D) at Panti to take over the matter.

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