

We'll appease native doctor with N1.7m for

Three weeks after the murder of 24-year-old Chetachukwu Lotanna at Banjeko Memorial Plaza, Oshodi, Lagos State, the market union is making frantic efforts to avert a dangerous spell which the father of the deceased vowed to cast on the killers of his son. The police on their path are still waiting for the family of the deceased to officially report the case before taking action, while legal practitioners say there is no sense in the Police's position. **CHIJOKE IREMEKA reports**

There are strong indications that the executives committee of the Banjeko Memorial Plaza, Oshodi, Lagos State, where 24-year-old Chetachukwu Lotanna was murdered in cold blood by his fellow marketers on suspicion of insanity, has contributed N1.7million to be given to the father of the deceased, a very powerful native doctor in Anambra State, to assuage the loss.

Sunday Telegraph gathered that those directly involved in the murder of the young man, were compelled to contribute N150, 000 each, while those affected by the union's action of mandatory closure of stalls due to the murder, contributed N20, 000 each.

Those who fell into the first category were those directly linked with the physical assault of Chetachukwu, while the other group members are linked with the crime because they share the same business premises with the perpetrators of the heinous act.

"I heard money had been contributed to settle Cheta's father, but I don't know how much would be given to the deceased family as compensation for the young trader's murder. Many of our people disclosed that, the sum of N1.7million would be sent to Cheta's father in the village, but I don't know the total amount raised, since the union has not said anything about the matter," one of the traders, Chigozie Mbaekwe, revealed.

Our source revealed that, the market union and the Oshodi branch of

Okija Town Union in Lagos are dialoguing on settlement of the case without the involvement of the police.

According to the Union's spokesperson, Udegbuma Nduba, the desire to settle without the involvement of the police was prompted by the gruesome manner young man was killed by people who knew him.

He noted that the killing of Chetachukwu was not pre-meditated but accidental. "We often catch thieves in this market and beat them mercilessly. The moment they have small space, they will run away but that wasn't the same case with Cheta. Those who assaulted him never knew he was going to die the way he did. The intention was not to kill him, but according to the perpetrators, the beating was meant for him to regain his perceived lost senses after taking overdose of Indian hemp."

"I want to believe that Cheta had been killed in the spirit world and what transpired that day was a physical manifestation of what had been concluded in the spirit world and these were some of the things the executive committee of the market union considered and decided to opt for settlement."

"Cheta did not belong to any of the Anambra State town's associations and could have died elsewhere without any repercussion, but his unfortunate death happened here in our market and we didn't have any option than to make the expensive arrangement for his corpse to be taken home to Anambra State in a paid ambulance. If Cheta had died outside the Oshodi Market, I'm sure his corpse would not get home. The corpse would have been buried in Lagos. It takes the involvement of the various town associations for members' corpse to be taken home because it is very expensive."

Our source added: "Times are hard and I think the money already contributed would go a long way to help Cheta's poor and heartbroken father."

Like I said, if Cheta had died outside the market, his people would not get anything, in the present situation, his death has brought N1.7million to his poor family."

It was gathered that the money has not been sent to Cheta's father as the traders are still contributing money to that effect. In a sharp contrast, a few traders revealed that the money had been sent to the native doctor father of Cheta, who bluntly refused to collect it on the ground that the Okija deity called 'Arusi Okija' had not instructed him to take money yet as the deity had not concluded its investigation on the death of his son.

One of the traders in the plaza where Chetachukwu was killed, Jidefor Okafor, who hawks leather belt, said: "I learnt that Cheta's father rejected the N1.7million contributed by the traders to settle the matter. According to what I heard, Cheta's father said that the deity 'Arusi Okija' asked him not to collect money from the traders yet."

Meanwhile, the traders on the lane where Cheta was killed at the Banjeko Memorial Plaza, Oshodi, had, since two weeks ago, resumed business activities with the exception of a particular female trader, in whose stall, Cheta's physical assault started. Eyewitnesses claimed that the late Cheta bit the woman on her breast. The woman was said to be a native of Uhu-Obo in Ihiala Local Government

Area of Anambra State, the same village with Cheta. It was her shout of agony, according to the eyewitness, that assembled Cheta's assailants.

It was also gathered that after the Sunday Telegraph's publication of the incident, the executives of the market warned its members against giving out information to journalists, for fear of the police wading into the matter, which might force the state government to lock up their stalls.

Another source in the market, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, stated that, there was tension on Monday, November 28, 2016, after the story was published on November 27. The traders were scared that the police would come in for arrests, but it didn't happen.

Sequel to this, the market union executives issued a directive that no one should respond to unknown persons on the case of Cheta's death. All efforts made to get the Chairman of the union to speak proved abortive.

"After Sunday Telegraph published the story, the traders have been very careful. We have not heard anything about the incident. The executives have devised a means of communication only through their mobile phones. Meetings called have also been between carefully selected executive members. The leaders do not tell anybody anything any longer. It has been selective discussions among executives and some

Babies whose mums smoked while

Pregnant mums who smoke during pregnancy are much more likely to have children who go on to smoke cannabis, new research has revealed.

The research from the University of Bristol found that smoking during pregnancy can help to set patterns of behaviour in later years.

It is already widely accepted that smoking just one cigarette a day can harm the health of unborn children. It can lead to birth defects, premature delivery and increase the chances of miscarriage.

But now new research has found smoking makes it more likely for infants to go on to smoke cannabis as teenagers.

The 40-year longitudinal study provides the first evidence that prenatal exposure to the class of stress hormones known as glucocorticoids predicts nicotine dependence later in life - but only for daughters. It also confirms previous research that babies born to moms who smoked when pregnant have an increased risk of nicotine addiction in adulthood.

The study found that effects of maternal stress hormones and maternal smoking in pregnancy were additive in predicting nicotine addiction in adult daughters. The findings, published online by the journal Biological Psychiatry, point to the enduring influence of the prenatal environment and the importance of maternal health and well-being during pregnancy.

Lead author Laura Stroud, Ph.D., from the Centers for Behavioral and Preventive Medicine at The Miriam Hospital, says the study supports the critical role of the prenatal environment when it comes to risk factors for adult disease, meaning some people may be predisposed to, or 'programmed' for, certain conditions later in life because of exposures during pregnancy, such as stress and mater-

nal smoking.

"While maternal smoking during pregnancy has been shown to be an independent risk factor for nicotine dependence, we didn't really know - until now - which pathways or mechanisms were responsible. Most prior research involving biological mechanisms had been conducted in animals not humans," she said.

"Our study suggests that maternal smoking and high stress hormones - often linked to high stress and adverse social conditions - represent a 'double-hit' in terms of increasing an offspring's risk for nicotine addiction as an adult." Because mothers who smoke are often more stressed and living in adverse conditions - these findings represent a public health concern and highlight the need to help smoking moms quit and reduce stress levels and improve social conditions for poor pregnant mothers," Stroud added.

Associations between prenatal exposure to both glucocorticoids - particularly cortisol - and tobacco smoke emerged only for daughters, which Stroud says is consistent with some recent research findings.

"Our findings highlight the particular vulnerability of daughters to long-term adverse outcomes following maternal stress and smoking during pregnancy," she said. "We don't yet know why this is, but possible mechanisms include sex differences in stress hormone regulation in the placenta and adaptation to prenatal environmental exposures. Also, cortisol and nicotine may affect developing male and female brains differently."

"Furthermore, if daughters of smoking mothers are more likely to grow up nicotine dependent, the result is dangerous cycle of intergenerational transmission of nicotine addiction," she added.

Despite the warnings and known health



Late Cheta