



NEWS

Seeking justice for Baby Agbowo



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Sunday Agbowo, 35, and his wife Ukamaka, are not a happy couple right now. Both are indigenes of Opi in Nsukka Local Government Area but reside at Oghe in Ezeagu Local Government Area, both in Enugu State. They have remained in grief since the death of their three-month old baby girl, Adaeze.

The baby died after Mrs. Agbowo was arrested and detained, alongside the little baby, at the Area Command of the Nigeria police, Oji River. The nursing mother was arrested by a

police operatives for allegedly selling “white paper”, which was said to be the kind of that Indian hemp smokers use in wrapping their weed.

She was picked up at Afor Oghe market around 10am in the month of January 2017 and taken to Oji River Area command with her baby, where they were detained till around 11pm that day. The baby developed sickness that night and was rushed to the hospital the next day, where she died eight hours later.

The parents of the baby had since petitioned the Enugu State Police Command, demanding justice. They are alleging that the baby died due to the adverse condition she and her mother were subjected to in the police station.

The couple sent in the petition through their lawyer, Olu Omotayo, Esq, a human rights lawyer and activist. In the petition addressed to the Commissioner of Police Enugu State and to the Inspector General of Police, titled, “Appeal for justice; Re: complaint of Mr. Sunday Agbowo over unlawful detention of his wife, Mrs. Ukamaka Agbowo and her 3-month-old baby which led to the subsequent death of the baby”, the bereaved parents are seeking thorough investigation into the matter with a view to ensuring justice.

The petition reads: “We write to you in respect of the above-mentioned matter on behalf of Mr. Sunday Agbowo of Afor-Oghe, Ezeagu. Mr. Agbowo, a patent medicine dealer at Afor-Oghe, Ezeagu, informed us that sometimes in January 2017, some policemen led by an Inspector Jerry came to Afor Oghe (market square), and arrested his wife who was nursing a three-month-old baby named Adaeze Agbowo.

“According to Mr. Agbowo, the offence of his wife, who was arrested in her shop was that she sells rolls of white paper, which the policemen claimed Indian hemp smokers used in Indian hemp. Mrs. Agbowo said all she knows is that the paper is used for writing and people are using it to wrap Indian hemp is not her business.

“Mr. Agbowo further informed us that the policemen arrested his wife with her baby and took her to Oji River Police Station.

Agbowo said he later went to the Police Station with the Lady Chairman of Patent medicine dealers, Ezeagu and secured the bail of his detained wife after paying some amount of money. “Agbowo further stated that his wife was detained in the cell alongside the baby till the baby died which made the baby very weak. The baby later became sick and was taken to a hospital where she later died.

The Doctors’ Report from the Hospital is attached herewith. “Agbowo said a policeman from Oji River named Mr. Ugwu, later came to him and said he heard what happened and wanted to make peace between his family and the policemen who arrested his wife.

“Agbowo said he and his wife have been in pains since the death of Adaeze who was a police officer. “The police unlawful arrest”. The counsel to the bereaved couple wondered why policemen from Oji River Police Station left Oji River Local Government Area to perform “illegal duty” at Ezeagu Local Government Area despite the fact that there is a Police station in Ezeagu.

“We urge you to in the interest of justice order a thorough investigation into this matter to ensure that justice is done in respect of this case as the circumstances of this case demand.

the lawyer who is also the President of a civil right group, Civil Rights Realization and Advancement Network (CRRAN) said in the petition.

A medical report from Chukwuaruka Hospital and Maternity, Afor Oghe, Ezeagu Local Government Area, which was attached to the petition reads, “This is to certify that A Adaeze died in the above institution due to diarrhea and vomiting with plasmolysis within hours of admission, 7/1/17”.

Speaking with our reporter, the father of the deceased baby girl, Sunday Agbowo, said the death of her little daughter has subjected the family to endless pain ever since. He said a friend of his secured the bail of his wife with the sum of N20, 000 from the police station after her arrest and hours of detention.

He said that they had to travel on a motor bike with the adverse weather condition all the way from Oji River to Ezeagu on the day her wife was released from the police station.

“The baby’s ill health started that night and we suspected pneumonia. We took her to the hospital in the morning and the baby died that same day.” Agbowo said he suspected that the police officer that arrested his wife came on illegal operation. He said one of the officers at the police station was lambasting those that carried out the arrest and detention of his wife and the bail was not paid.

“That officer advised them to allow my wife to go. In fact, he told them that he doesn’t see the woman in that police station when he comes the next day. But the operatives that arrested my wife were recalcitrant.

They held my wife for several hours until we parted with N20, 000. “I need justice. Let the person involved be fished out for appropriate sanction and let the police pay compensation for the pains they subjected my family to. The trauma is still with us till date,” he said.

He said that the late baby was his second child, as she was junior to his son and first child. He said that his wife is currently pregnant. He lamented that his family never sold Indian cigarettes nor smoked it, claiming that the said “white paper” which the police seized from his house was used for so many things, including wrapping foodstuff and writing. He said that if indeed his wife committed any offence, the police would have charged her to court afterward, but they didn’t.

Agbowo said he had severally been to the Enugu Command of the Nigerian police and was promised to investigate the matter. When contacted, the Enugu State Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Ebere Amaraizu, a Superintendent of Police (SP) confirmed to our report that the command received the petition from Agbowo family.

He said that the current Commissioner of Police, Danmalam Mohammed inherited the matter as he was not in the state when the incident took place. “The petition is received and investigation ordered into the matter. That is being done currently,” the PPRO said.

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