

Crime

Grieving mother: God should have taken me, spared my son

Taiwo Jimoh

Mrs. Muibat Onifade is 52 cut a picture of a broken woman. Tears have become her daily companion as she cried daily, asking God a series of questions.

She was plunged into mourning after her 24-year-old blue-eyed boy, Yusuf Onifade, was killed by suspected cultists. The grieving mother said that the boy was killed in the most gruesome manner. He was killed on Valentine Day, February 14.

She said: "I don't know why God didn't take my life and spared that of my son. With the death of Yusuf, my days are numbered. It is the death of my son that is going to kill me. I cannot cope without him beside me."

Muibat had been pregnant and had 10 babies, but they all died. Refusing to give up on having children, she kept trying and finally had five children that survived. Yusuf was one of the latter children who survived. Among her children, Yusuf found a firm place in her heart because he was "giving and generous".

According to her, Yusuf was lured out of their home by some friends, pumped full of tramadol and then taken to another venue, where cultists attacked him with planks.

As the planks hit him from all directions, he allegedly repeatedly cried and begged them to spare his life because of his mother. But his attackers, like is common among cultists, refused to listen to his pleas.

The inconsolable mum explained: "I was told that immediately the cultists took Yusuf to Odo-Eran, other members of Aiye cult group came out from their hideout and started beating him with planks. My son pleaded with them not to kill him for the sake of his mother. But my son's pleading fell on deaf ears."

"The Aiye cultists continued hitting him with planks. The leader of the Aiye group, Akeju, was said to have brought out a gun and shot my son in the head. After killing Yusuf, Akeju called Idowu



Muibat



Yusuf

and told him that my son had been killed."

Yusuf was said to have been killed about 10a.m. at Odo-Eran, Bariga area of Lagos State.

On the fateful day of his murder, Yusuf was relaxing in bed when he received a phone call from one of his friends. The caller asked him to meet him at Ososa Street, Bariga.

After the call, he got up from the bed, picked his shirt and jeans and rushed out of the house. According to Muibat, when Yusuf was leaving home, he kissed her, saying he would back in a jiffy.

When our correspondent visited Muibat's house at No. 3, Ogundero Street, Bariga, the mother of five worn sadness like a garment and wouldn't crack up a smile for anyone.

Muibat said she had a premonition that her son would die. She had also made efforts to prevent that premonition from coming to pass. She recollected trying to stop Yusuf from going out on that fateful day.

She added: "There was a day Yusuf was sleeping. I was outside the house when a man came to me. The man said that I should warn my son to be careful; that someone was going to die. In the morning when he was about to go out, I knelt and begged him not to go out. I also asked him where he was going. It is because of the love my son has for me, that he inscribed

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on his right arm, 'mummy's favourite' and on his left arm, 'Only God can judge me.' I repeatedly warned him to know the friends he kept.

"It was Akeju who called my son on the phone to meet him at Ososa Street. Yusuf and Akeju took motorbike to Odo-Eran area in the community. When they got there, Yusuf was forced to take tramadol, which made him to start misbehaving.

"When they noticed that he wasn't himself anymore, they placed him on the same motorbike that brought him earlier and took him to Odo-Eran area where some other Aiye members were already waiting for his arrival. I was returning from where I went to collect prayer water for Yusuf for protection when news of his death reached me. I tried to rush to the scene, but I was prevented. I later went to Bariga Police Station, where I saw the remains of my son in the police van."

Asked if Yusuf was a cult member, she responded: "My son was once a member of Aiye, but not anymore. I was in the mosque one fateful day when I heard some boys discuss that Yusuf was their member. When it was night, I woke up in the middle of the night, knelt down before him and asked him if he was a member. He didn't lie to me; he promised to renounce his membership. Since he renounced his membership, these cultists had been pursuing him up and down.

"I tried all I could as a mother to prevent him from this untimely death; even when I didn't know my son was a cultist. I always advise him not to join them. I told him that whoever joined cultism, death is the end. I never knew then that he was a member."

Weeping silently, she sniffed: "Where do I start from now? I have sold all my belongings to make sure that my children get the best."

She opened her wardrobe to show our correspondent its emptiness.

"After they killed my son, a boy called Usman came to tell me that government officials held a peace parley with various cult groups in Bariga and Oworoshoki. They agreed to give me N100,000, which I told him I didn't want."

"Those who killed my son are Akeju, Emir, Small Shaggy, Mosquito, Stone, He don't tell and Gbebo. The Lagos State Commissioner of Police, Zubairu Muazu, should go after these suspects."

Yusuf's sister, Kehinde Onifade, said his death came to her as a surprise.

She disclosed that three days before Yusuf's death, he was sleeping on the mattress when, "I begged him to allow me take something under the mattress. Immediately I took what I wanted to take, I went straight to my father's house at

CONTINUED ON PAGE 18

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