

A litany of unresolved murder cases

For nearly two decades, several personalities have been murdered in controversial circumstances in Delta State. For several years running, investigations are still ongoing with many of the cases already cold with no headway. In this report, **DOMINIC ADEWOLE** in Asaba, chronicles a list of cases that have occurred in the state with no resolution in sight

Many people have been murdered or assassinated in Delta State by unknown persons and investigations into the circumstances have remained inconclusive.

Politicians, captains of industries, banking and oil moguls, even motorcycle and tricycle riders have been killed in their cold bloods and nothing came out of such investigations.

No fewer than 20 police officers, most of whom are Inspectors, have been attacked, killed or fatally injured by hoodlums during 'stop and search' routine at checkpoints in the state and their rifles snatched.

① Some were shot along Nnebisi road, at Cable-Point axis and Anwai road within Asaba, the state capital. An Inspector was killed inside a police van early this year along Ogwashi Uku-Kwale road and his rifle stolen while his team members were busy with their road-block business. The rest about him is history till date.

The excuse by security operatives in the state is either 'investigation is still ongoing', 'we are still on the trail of the perpetrators' or 'we have spread out our dragnets' or 'laid our tentacles to arrest the hoodlums.'

Some of the perpetrators of this heinous crime operated with guns. Some killed their victims with their fist by strangling. Till date, no perpetrator has been nabbed and brought to book.

② A prominent politician, Chief A. Dikibo, the former chairman (South-South) of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), was shot dead by suspected assailants near Kwale, along the Asaba-Ughelli-Warri road, about 17 years ago.

Although, the then Inspector-General of Police, Mr Sunday Ehindero, reacted to the gruesome murder by ordering the Delta State Police Command to track down his killers, the rest is history till date.

③ Is it all over for Mr. London Richard Ekomutie, a member of the Delta State Anti-Kidnapping / Oil Facility Surveillance Committee? He was brutally murdered by suspected gunmen at Warri / Sapele road, a few metres away from the garage, on the May 3, this year, at about 4:30 p.m.

A source said Ekomutie was returning from a friend's house when his assailants, who had laid siege, struck.

But South-South Focus learnt that 'the victim had barely made efforts to clear some of the issues raised by his attackers when the killers shot him at point blank range.' Ekomutie was said to have slumped while the killers escaped.

His travail was said to have started several months ago when he was appointed a member of the State Anti-kidnapping / Oil Facility Surveillance Committee. He became a targeted member, particularly among those who are afraid that their illicit means of income may suffer a major setback.

He was tagged 'government-

spy', an agent of security for government. This allegedly led to hatred and distrust among his associates and some elements, who were ready within the committee to compromise the assignment. His determined posture costs him his life.

Although, the Delta State Police Public Relations Officer, DSP Onome Onowavkpoyeya, reacted by saying 'the command had launched a full scale manhunt for his killers', nothing meaningful has come out of the investigation.

④ Prior to Ekomutie murder, the murder of Chief Muogare, a Peoples Democratic Party chieftain from Ughelli North Local Government of the state, who was shot by unknown assailants, had been lingering. He was a former Special Projects Director in charge of roads rehabilitation in Ughelli.

15 years ago, a prominent Warri politician, Chief Vilo Ovdj, was assassinated by alleged gunmen in a mysterious circumstance that puzzled and sent panic across the rank and file of his family.

In the usual language of detectives, the police 'swung into action' to nab the killers. But lo

and behold, the search had been in futility.

⑤ On Sunday June 8 at about 7:30am, one Samuel Onyemenam, Head Chauffer of the popular Orchid Hotels in Asaba, who was off duty, allegedly received a phone call from the General Manager of the hotel, Mr. Taiwo Akinola, requesting him to report to duty because a guest wanted to be driven around Asaba in a charter car.

Despite that his wife, Mary, protested that he should finish his meal before leaving, he promptly abandoned his breakfast to meet

up. Apprehension however, set in when at 4:00p.m same day, he had not returned home. His GSM line could not be reached.

When efforts by the family and management of the hotel about his whereabouts failed, the police was said to have been alerted. Detectives swung again into three-day intensive search but the missing driver could not be found.

Shock enveloped his family when his decomposed body was discovered by some passers-by in an uncompleted building a few metres away from the state's Ministry of Transport, along Benin-Onitsha road. The police was immediately alerted.

⑥ The life of the Chief Internal Auditor with Delta State Post Primary Education Board (PPEB), Mr. John Uchenna, who hailed from Mgboko Utaba Umuagwu community in Ilah, Oshimili Local Government Area of the state, was cut short by yet unidentified gunmen.

He was trailed from the popular Nnebisi road within Asaba, where he had allegedly gone to host his visitors at his private residence at Austin Okolo Street, off Direct



One of the victims



Governor Ifeanyi Okowa of Delta State