

Seeking justice for Nnenna

Though dead, Nnenna Onu may get justice at last, because of the dust her gruesome murder is raising within and outside Ebonyi State.

Nnenna, 35, was butchered and allegedly set ablaze by her father's kindred on December 23, 2021 for demanding her late father's property.

The incident occurred in Amaegwu Anike, Onicha Igboeze community in Onicha local government area of Ebonyi state. Her 65 years old mother, Mrs. Agnes Okorie had approached the state Family Law center calling on the special court to bring the killers of the young lady.

Madam Okorie accused her husband's kinsmen of conspiracy, mysterious murder of her 6 children earlier, brutally killing Nnenna in their compound and setting her corpse ablaze.

She also alleged that Nnenna's killers absconded with one Nnenna's ankle-foot and set every valuable in her house on fire.

The woman told the Family Law Centre that she gave birth to eight children comprising 5 males and 3 females but 6 of them died mysteriously leaving only two females.

She said that following the death of all her five male children her husband's half brothers, sisters and kinsmen led by one Okoro Nwaokorie who is now late, allegedly began to maltreat them to the extent that her husband left the extended family main compound and built a personal house far away for peace to reign despite that it was his inheritance as first son of the family.

Madam Okorie further alleged that they compelled her husband to get a second wife, constantly beat her and the girls up at any slightest provocation, maltreating them by depriving them turns to harvest palm fruits from the family plantation, other economic trees and cultivating on their kindred land in spite of the fact that her husband, Onu Okorie was the eldest son in the family simply because he had no surviving male child.

According to the widow, amidst the maltreatments she and her husband fell sick but the man didn't make it, as if the pain was not enough. The extended family accused her and the girls of killing their brother, excommunicated them and secretly fixed his burial date without their consent and knowledge.

She noted that five days to the burial date, Nnenna got the information and dragged the kindred to National Human Rights Commission Abakaliki and Ebonyi state Family Law Center for planning to bury their father without their knowledge and consent just because they are females and the organization intervened



Nnenna (before and after her death)



and stopped the plan.

According to the woman, the kindred felt challenged and embarrassed by the action of her late daughter whom they described as 'little girl of yesterday', consequently threatened to deal with her and cut off the legs that took her to National Human Rights Commission.

She revealed that in November 2021, she and her girls were also accused of diabolically killing one of her stepsons, Okoro Nwaokorie and that as the hostility increased, in the night of 23rd December 2021, Nnenna was attacked, killed and set ablaze alongside their valuables in the compound, when she was sick and traveled to Abakaliki to receive medical care.

The widow alleged that her daughter's killers cut off her leg from the ankle and made away with it and called on governments at all levels, cooperative bodies and all well meaning Nigerians to intervene and secure justice for her as she cannot afford the services of a lawyer to seek redress in a court of law.

"They excommunicated and accused me and my girls of being witches and having eaten up all my male children to frustrate their brother (my husband). Between December and now, the police is yet to make any arrest despite the gruesome murder of my daughter in her father's compound. The corpse was buried after some days because the morticians refused to accept her for preservation. Now I am left with only one child out of 8", she lamented.

The deceased's younger sister, Mrs Juliet Onu, appealed to Governor Dave Umahi and all the security agencies in the

state to help her family to apprehend Nnenna's killers and bring them to justice.

Narrating the circumstances surrounding Nnenna's death, Juliet feared that she could have been murdered over her efforts to recover their family inheritance after their father's death.

Juliet alleged that their inheritance was taken away after the death of their father many years ago, followed by the "mysterious death" of all their male siblings.

"After the death of our father and brothers, Nnenna and I have been struggling to survive with our poor mother.

"When I got married, I left, leaving Nnenna alone with our mother. Today, my mother cannot go to farm because she has been deprived from ownership of any property after our father's death.

"Now, she cannot go to the village because they do not want her alive. She has been living with me and my husband in Abakaliki, the state capital.

"We were expecting her to visit us during the Christmas celebration but we did not see her. On Christmas day, my husband travelled to the village to check on her, only to find out that she had been murdered.

"We want justice for our family, especially my mother, who is a widow. We also call on religious leaders, civil society organizations and well-meaning individuals for assistance," Juliet said.

The National Human Rights Commission, Ebonyi State branch has called for an end to obnoxious and harmful cultures in the state.

The state Coordinator of the commission, Onyekachi Okorie made the call while re-

acting to Nnenna's gruesome murder.

He called on all stakeholders to assist the police to secure justice for Nnenna.

"This is a moment when we all must come together as a people and say with one voice and conscious affirmation 'Never Again'. This novel and emerging culture of deaths must be eradicated from our midst once and for all. The time is now.

The Commission is yet to meet with the Police to this regard, though a letter requesting for the update on the case has been sent to the police from the commission. The commission condemns this heinous act and call for immediate actions towards apprehending the suspects and securing lives of the surviving members of the deceased family.

"We appeal to the local government chairman of Onicha LGA, Hon Felix Igboke, the coordinator of Ezeukwa development center Igwe Agwu, the member representing Onicha West state constituency Hon. Chukwuma Igwe, the traditional ruler of Onicha Igboeze autonomous community Eze Agom Eze, all leaders of religious organizations in Onicha Igboeze autonomous community to assist the Nigerian Police and smoke out the perpetrators of this crime.

"The Commission passionately calls on all good spirited citizens of Ebonyi state and beyond, the CSOs, cooperative bodies, the religious Organizations, to come to the aid of this widow (Mrs Agnes Onu) with a view to helping her get justice for her late daughter, rehabilitation and security.

"Evil can be stopped only when it is exposed. The general public is enjoined to report

all cases of Human Rights violations in the state to National Human Rights commission (NHRC) hotline (07060455554) to the police and all CSOs that are involved with Human Rights defense. Finally, the commission renews its call for respect for Human Rights in Ebonyi state and beyond. Human life and dignity are sacrosanct and must be promoted, protected and enforced at all times."

Meanwhile, Anike Community at the weekend, pledged to assist the police in their investigation to unmask the killers of Nnenna.

The Chairman of the community, Phillip Nwankwor, made the pledge while reacting to the gruesome murder of the lady.

In an interview with our correspondent in Abakaliki, Nwankwor described the killing as barbaric.

He called on the people of the community to join hands with the police and other relevant security agencies to fish out the perpetrators of the crime from the community.

He said, "The act is purely an evil against our community and we condemn it in totality. On our side as a community, we have already made a pronouncement and incantations against the persons behind the killing of our daughter.

"We believe and hope that our tradition will not allow them to go unpunished. I promise that I am ready to support the police in finding the killers.

The state Police Command said it had commenced investigations into the ugly incident.

The command's Spokesperson, DSP Loveth Odah, said the police investigating team had visited the scene but no arrest had so far been made.

"The police have commenced clinical investigation into the matter. What delayed the investigation and arrest before now was that the family failed to make official report to the command when the incident happened.

"Well, the family told us that the failure to report the matter on time was due to the threats to them by their relatives should they report to the police.

"Right now, we are on top of the matter and the Police Commissioner, Aliyu Garba, has pledged to get to its root. We have visited the scene and we will continue to follow up until the perpetrators are brought to book," Odah said.

The late Nnenna was a graduate of Public Administration at Akanu Ibiam Federal Polytechnic, Uwanna, Afikpo in the state.