

Crime

Taiwo Jimoh

Murder

A distraught widow, Esther Osaghae, has narrated how her husband of one year died in a mysterious way in his work place at Auchi in Et-sako West Local Government Area of Edo State.

Esther has therefore appealed to the Inspector General of Police, IGP Kayode Egbetokun, to unravel every mystery surrounding the death of her 33-year-old husband, Fidelis Osaghae.

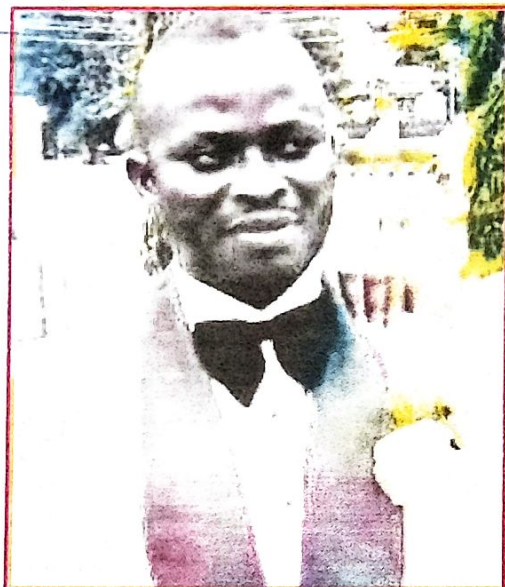
The widow whose marriage was just a year old and still nursing a two-month-old baby, made the appeal on Tuesday during a press briefing organised by the Akin Fadeyi Foundation (AFF), a non-governmental organisation pressing for justice for her and the deceased family.

According to her, something was fishy and she has refused to believe what was presented to her by her husband's boss, Valentine Oyemike, owner of ValChi Fast Foods, that Osaghae killed himself by drinking sniper at his workplace, ValChi Fast Foods and Bar, Angle 90 Branch, in Auchi.

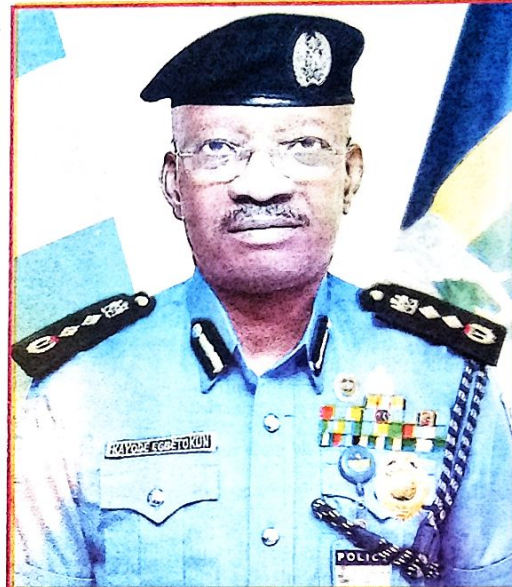
The deceased before his death was said to be the manager of the ValChi fast food centre.

The widow said she suspected that her husband must have been murdered after seeing dark patches and injuries on his body. She said she also noticed that his trouser was torn as if he was manhandled by someone before he was killed.

Widow seeks justice for husband killed mysteriously one year after marriage



Late Fidelis Osaghae



IGP, Kayode Egbetokun

Genesis

The issue started on July 28, 2024, the widow was at home when her husband left for work at 1pm, and came back at about 2:30am, saying his boss asked him to come and bring something for him, and then dashed out again, telling his wife not to lock the door, that he was coming back soon.

"I slept off and when I woke up, it was about 5am, on July 29, I realised that my husband was not yet back, so I called his phone line, but my husband didn't pick his phone.

"I then called his office, it was one Tracy who picked up my husband's phone and said that the situation was under control and hung up, that was after several phone calls.

"Tracy refused to pick up the subsequent calls from me. At about 6am, my husband boss, Mr. Oyemike called, and asked me to come to Favour Hospital, I asked why, and I asked what happened to my husband, but no explanation was given to me.

"My sister, Omolara, who was with me when Oyemike called, asked me to stay back because I am nursing a baby, while Omolara went to the hospital, she saw Oyemike and repeatedly asked for the whereabouts of my husband, it was then Oyemike took Omolara to his car, where she saw the dead body of my husband lying in his car."

She added that the only person who could shed light on what happened to her husband, including explaining the strange marks on his body, was his boss, Oyemike.

DPO

Meanwhile, the incident was reported to the Auchi Police Station, but the Divisional Police Officer, was accused by the widow of not arresting anybody ten days after the

matter was reported to the station for investigation.

The widow also alleged that the Divisional Police Officer in charge of Auchi Police Station tried to dissuade her from seeking an autopsy and then told her he suspected her and her sister of being behind the death of her husband.

On August 6, 2024, the widow and her husband family members were again at the Police Station, but neither Oyemike nor anyone from his organisation was at the police station for the meeting.

The Auchi Police Division DPO is always defending the deceased boss, Oyemike, even without carrying out an investigation. The DPO also advised the widow's family to think properly of what they had written as statements, and that he was the only person the IGP would listen to in this case.

"Unfortunately, Oyemike and Tracy are walking free, while the Police have made no arrest and my husband is there lying in the mortuary. We are being invited to the police station everyday without having any arrest so far on the matter.

"I understand Oyemike is an influential personality, having a hotel, restaurant and recreational centre in Auchi, so we called for the transfer of the case to the force headquarters, Abuja in order to get justice, I do not have confidence in the Auchi Police Station, its DPO and the Edo State Police Command as a whole, because of the manner the matter is being handled by the DPO of Auchi Division.

"Whenever the police invited us to the Auchi Police Division, nobody from Oyemike's office will come to represent the organisation. I am appealing to the Inspector General of Police, Edo State Government and Nigerians to help me get justice for my husband.

"I don't want him to die in vain. We are a young couple who just got married. I have not enjoyed my marriage

before he was killed in a mysterious circumstance, I want to know those behind his death. Nigerians should come to my aid and rescue me."

NGO

In an effort to get justice and also get to the root of the husband's death, she ran to a Nongovernmental Organization, (NGO), Akin Fadeyi Foundation (AFF), to help her get justice for the murder of her husband.

Meanwhile, AFF has petitioned the office of the Inspector General of Police, at the force headquarters, Abuja, appealing to the IGP "to take over the matter and get justice for the young widow and her toddler."

A copy of the acknowledged petition, which was signed by AFF's Executive Director, Akin Fadeyi, and obtained by New Telegraph, noted that the Auchi Police Division is not trusted to handle the case, as they were, "quick to jump to conclusions by exonerating Oyemike from being a part of the death of Osaghae."

The petition reads further: "That since this incident occurred, Oyemike has been walking freely, and the DPO of the Auchi division, Edo State, has not demonstrated any willingness to take necessary actions toward addressing the matter of this suspicious homicide.

"That based on this trajectory, it is clear to us that the events surrounding the death of Osaghae are suspicious."

Mr Fadeyi said his organisation believes there is a presumption of innocence until proven guilty before the law in Nigeria and that such belief informed the decision to request the IGP to take over the case.

"We do not have confidence in Edo State Police Command, and that is why the case was asked to be transferred to Abuja. We want the authority to do their job, we trust the confidence of the police to get to the root of the matter. We don't wish to live in such a place where

justice will be denied," Mr Fadeyi told journalists.

"We believe in the capacity of the Nigerian Police to get justice for Mrs Esther and we are willing to provide the necessary support in this regard. We look forward to a speedy investigation and appropriate action to address this injustice," he noted.

Widow's sister

The widow's sister, Omolara, who also visited the Police Station with some family members of the deceased and their church members, said the manner the DPO was defending Oyemike was very disappointing.

Omolara said the DPO told her that "he and Oyemike were suspecting Esther and I of killing Osaghae."

"The DPO was always speaking in defence of Oyemike, always claiming that Oyemike is a reputable man in the community and state in general.

"Oyemike has not even come to pay us a condolence visit. The DPO said that if we wanted to do the case, we would spend money, that autopsy alone will cost us N600,000.

"Each time I tried to talk he kept shutting me up. But we are not afraid of investigation. We want the case to be investigated."

When Mr. Valentine Oyemike was contacted to get his reaction on the matter, he said, "I am sleeping, you just woke me up, I can't talk now, I am very sorry" and he hung up his phone.

Police react

When contacted, the Edo State Police Public Relations Officer, (PPRO) Joel Moses, said the matter is under investigation.

When asked if any suspect has been arrested so far, he said "when I told you we are investigating, the investigation covers every aspect either arrest or not."

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