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THIS DAY

Nigeria: Another Journalist Killed in Calabar

Ernest Chinwo

6 May 2010

Calabar — The spate of killings of journalists across the country is yet to abate despite public outcry against the trend as the camera man of Channels Television in Cross River State, Mr Jerry Usanga, was killed in Calabar, the state capital on Tuesday.

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THISDAY gathered that Usang was out at a bar with some friends at the Federal Housing Estate along the Murtala Mohammed Highway around 8:00 pm when an argument ensued.

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It was learnt that after settling the problem, Usanga left the scene only to be followed by one of the people he had a misunderstanding with. The person allegedly gave him a deadly blow on the head on his way home. He was said to have died as a result of the attack.

The late Usang's wife, Rose, told newsmen that she had spoken with her husband at about 3:00 pm on that fateful day. Rose, a final year student of Education Administration at the University of Calabar, got home at 5:00pm, but did not see her husband at home. She then prepared his meal and waited for him to return from work.

According to the aggrieved widow, she waited till about 8:00 pm and when her husband did not come back, she went out in the rain to call him on phone. She stated further: "I called him about five times and no one picked. After a while somebody called back with his phone. It was a strange voice. I thought it was one of his colleagues.

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He said he was a taxi man. I said the phone was my husband's own and then the person told me to come and carry my husband's body, that he had been knocked down by a vehicle close to the Nigerian Television Authority(NTA) along the highway.

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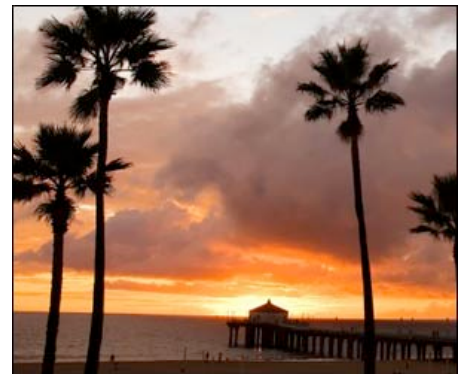
"I was shocked and started crying . I called his brother and explained to him . Everybody came down there that night and saw his remains."Divisional Police Officer of the Federal Housing Police Division, Mr Abdulkarim Dauda, confirmed the incident and said investigations into the matter had begun in earnest. The DPO said a suspect was already in police custody. He said the suspect is the son of the man who allegedly dealt the deadly blow on the late journalist and who is on the run.

The Channels reporter in Cross River State , Ms Glory Okon, who was shocked at the incident, said that the late Usanga left her at the office at about 2:30pm that fateful day and told her to call him if she needed his help. According to her, "That was the last time I saw or spoke with him. I received a call around 10:00 pm that my cameraman was dead." Reacting to the incident, Chairman of the Cross River State Council of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), Mr Omini Oden, condemned the act in totality and hoped that the Cross River State Police Command would get to the root of the matter and get the perpetrators to face the full weight of the law.

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