

Hacked Down in His Prime by Unidentified Killers

Described as easy-going who could hardly hurt a fly, the killing of 26-year-old Ezekiel Ayah last week has thrown the residents of Olamiko Street, Dopemu, Lagos in mourning mood. Even with the police still on the trail of the killers, the family of the deceased has called on the security agents to ensure that justice is meted out to the killers. Taiwo Akintunde writes

Residents of Olamiko Street, Dopemu area of Lagos State have decried the killing of Mr. Ezekiel Ayah, a co-resident before he was brutally beaten to death by some hoodlums in the area recently. The 26-year-old bachelor from Unale, Kogi State, lived on Number 14 of the street was described by both family and neighbours as an easy-going fellow and could not have had any issue with anybody before his death.

According to the leader of the Igala Community in the area, Chief Micheal Idakwo, the Odoma Onu Igala, Lagos State, Ezekiel was found dead in a gutter at the early hours of Wednesday, October 12, by a resident of Olamiko Street, who subsequently called on other residents to witness what he saw. "I had seen the body myself earlier that morning but never knew it was him. Some residents of the area told me he was beaten to death by some area boys the night before we discovered his body," he said.

He further explained that the matter was reported to Alabo Police Station, Dopemu and the policemen arrived immediately to recover his body from the scene saying that investigations are to be carried out before he could be released to the family for burial. "After his corpse was taken away by the police, I informed the overall Kogi Chief in Lagos State, Chief James Umoru, the Onu Igala Lagos State on the matter at hand and he immediately asked me to set up a committee to work with the police and ensure the perpetrators of the crime are apprehended," Idakwo said.

The Alabo Police division has invited several residents of Olamiko for interrogation but no concrete information has been gathered yet regarding the killing. The inspector in-charge of the case, Sergeant Jatto said Investigations were still on and they were about to carry out an autopsy on the corpse to determine how he was killed and who was responsible for his death.

On the other hand, the family of the deceased insisted that justice must prevail. Speaking to THISDAY in an interview, the elder brother to late Ezekiel, Mr. Gabriel Ayah, 35, a businessman in Makurdi, Benue State said the death of his brother is quite shocking to him and that he could not believe the news until he arrived Lagos few days after the incident. He also said that late Ezekiel was a brother so dear to him and that he never imagined he could lose such an important person to him at this time. "I spoke to him on phone just few hours to the incident and he told me all was well. Though I live in Makurdi but the distance meant nothing because we communicate more often and our spirits never deserted each other," he said.

Gabriel expressed gratitude to the gesture of the Kogi chiefs, Olamiko residents and the police towards the incident. "Though I did not witness the incident and did not arrive until three days after the incident but I felt the efforts of the Kogi chiefs, residents and the police towards the death of my brother and I want to thank them very much for their relentless efforts so far," he said.

Another close relative of late Ezekiel who once lived on Olamiko Street, Mr. Samuel Anekue described the deceased as an easy-going person. "Ezekiel lived with me for more than two years before getting a job at the Muritala

Muhammed International Airport as a clearing agent. He went on to rent a room apartment at No. 14 of the same street. Ever since, I never heard of any bad records of him from anybody and I don't think he had quarrelled with anybody before he died. His death is still a mystery to many of us. I always see him as a hard working fellow and a man with a great future ahead of him," he said.

The Chairman, Landlord Association of Olamiko Street whose name was withheld for security reasons said that the issue of hoodlums terrorising the neighbourhood has been in existence for long but the killing of Ezekiel is the high-point of it all. He also added that there have been several reports of gang rape on Olamiko Street by these 'area boys'. "The Police have been trying their best enough to contain the situation in this neighbourhood but the situation still remains the same. The death of Ezekiel is worrisome because as a leader in this neighbourhood, I have never heard of any negative report about the late young man. On behalf of Olamiko residents, I extend my utmost condolences to the families of late Ezekiel Ayah that God in his infinite mercy will grant them happiness thereafter," he concluded.



•Late Ezekiel

As Lagos Walks for Nature...

By Taiwo Akintunde

As part of efforts to combat climate change in Lagos State, the state Ministry of the Environment in collaboration with Nigerian Conservation Foundation recently held the annual walk for nature exercise aimed at creating awareness to the general public on the importance of preserving nature in the environment as well as promoting the operation green Lagos initiative. The early morning event tagged; 'Sustaining a Greener Lagos' was held at the State House, Marina, Lagos State and featured several relevant bodies. The exercise kicked off with a walk from the State House through Marina road to Victoria Island/Ikoyi Road and ended at the same starting point and participants were dressed in branded shirts of partners of the event.

The Walk for Nature, which is an annual event, was the third in the series since its commencement in 2009 and was aimed at sustaining awareness on the ever-growing need to adopt positive environmental behaviour, including the adoption of the green culture and proper waste disposal, in order to enhance the wellbeing of Lagosians and mitigate the attendant consequences of Climate Change.

The Walk for Nature which was well attended by over 500 participants, including students, corporate organisations and other friends of the environment, was led by the Governor of Lagos, Mr. Babatunde Fashola, who was represented by the Commissioner for the Environment, Mr. Tunji Bello.

Fashola cited Lagos State government's determination in addressing the issues of the environment as the reason for partnering the Non-governmental Organisations such as NCF, Friends of the Environment and commended the NCF for its efforts since 1980 to preserve nature and its resources.

In his keynote address, the governor of Lagos State emphasised the need to do more to preserve nature "so that we can all

live in peace," adding that it was important to walk for nature because: "When we walk for nature, we get closer to nature, we reduce vehicular emissions which contribute to global warming, and most importantly, walking keeps us fit and mentally alert."

Also speaking at the event, the president of the NCF, Izioma Philip Asioudu, commended the unrelenting efforts of the government of Lagos State in making the state clean and healthier, despite its monumental environmental and sanitation challenges. He also tasked governments at local levels to institute community-driven initiative on waste management as a measure for mitigating the risks of flood.

On the relationship between the environment and corporate business, Asioudu urged corporate bodies and the business community to take the issue of the environment more seriously "as it is very vital to their financial growth" and added that development is actually "the process that ensures the we meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs"

Erelu Abiola Dosumu, an environment ambassador, who was also present at the occasion, congratulated the Ministry of the Environment and the NCF for successfully carrying out three consecutive "walk for nature" and enjoined other states and organisations to emulate such passion for the environment.

Also represented at this year's edition of the Walk For Nature were representatives of Chevron Nigeria Limited, Aluko & Oyeode, MAERSK Nigeria Limited, UPDC PLC, NBC PLC, Nigerite Nigeria Limited, Fidelity Bank PLC, UAC Foods and 7up Bottling Company PLC.