

Arrest and Prosecute Killers of Okechukwu Nweke

The Advocacy for Alleged Witches urges the Inspector General of Police and Ebonyi State government to arrest and prosecute those who allegedly tortured and eventually murdered Chief Okechukwu Nweke of Ohaechara village of Inyere Community in Ezza North LGA of Ebonyi State. Chief Nweke was killed following allegations of witchcraft and harmful magic. Recently, the attention of AfAW was drawn to a post that was circulating on social media. The post states:

"On August 28, 2021, they branded a 31-year-old wealthy man, Chief Okechukwu Nweke a witch. They accused him of being responsible for the strange misfortunes that befell the village. He went to the bank of the Akadoro river to observe prayers as a member of the Sabbath church. He was wearing a red garment.

He was tied and dragged to the village square where he was beaten to death. He told them that he was a patent medicine dealer at Ogbo Owu market, Onitsha Anambra state but all his plea fell on deaf ears. They threw him into the Akadoro river. His lifeless body has yet to be recovered. They went through his phone and transferred five million naira..."

The post contains the photo of Chief Nweke while he was being tortured. The photo shows Nweke sitting on the ground and tied with a rope and some palm fronds. Someone from the community told AfAW that they tortured him for some time. And when the torturers realized that he was about to die, they tied up his hands and legs, went and threw him into a nearby river.

AfAW contacted relatives of the victim and they confirmed this tragic incident. The father told a local human rights group:

"They have killed my son for envy. Okechukwu was a Sabbath worshiper and he never killed anyone and he is not a thief. He was doing good business in Onitsha and has been helping me and his younger ones. On that fateful day, our Ezeogo asked them to take my son to the police over the allegations. They agreed with the Ezeogo. But immediately they left the palace, they tied ropes on my son's waist and neck, dragged him along the road like a goat, and began to beat and torture him mercilessly. I cried to them; I begged them but they continued to kill my son. If you know the story of Jesus Christ, that's how Okechukwu was tortured until they reached Ohaechara playground. After some time, our councilor came and told them that Ezeogo said they should take my son to the police. Upon hearing that, they had a brief meeting before they now tied my son's hands backward, carried him in a motorcycle, and told us they were going to the police. I made to follow them but they asked me to go back. Very shortly, they came back to tell us that my son slipped off their hands and fell into the Akadoro river. Up until now, we have not seen my son neither has his corpse been found".

The traditional ruler has also narrated what happened: "On Saturday 28 August 2021, a group of persons brought one boy to my palace with allegations of witchcraft and voodooism.

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