



●Late Dr. Augustus Isenmila, abducted from church and murdered in August 23, 2006

# Who killed Isenmila, and why?

●Dr. Augustine Isenmila, until his death an Assistant Director at NIFOR was abducted from church while ministering and murdered in cold blood. A year later, there are still no clues as to his murderers and their motive(s)

By Gabriel Enoghase,  
Benin City

**F**OR the family of Dr. Augustus Isenmila, an Assistant Director in Nigeria Institute for Oil Palm Research (NIFOR), near Benin, in Edo State, Wednesday the 23rd of August 2006 would forever remain indelible in their minds. On the fateful day, after saying farewell to his wife, Dr. Patience Isenmila, a lecturer at the University of Benin and his children, they never knew that would be his last encounter with them. He was abducted from the church where he was ministering by unknown people and murdered in cold blood. And one year after the gruesome murder, his murderers are yet to be apprehended by the Police. His murder has thus joined the list of unresolved murders in the country.

Thursday, 23rd of August 2007, the day marking the first anniversary of his death, *Saturday Vanguard* was at Idumu-Owu, Ebelle in Igueben Local Government Area of Edo State to speak to his ailing mother, Mrs. Ebadoloyi Okiti Isenmila-Iyoha who is yet to recover from the brutal murder of her son. Besides, late Dr. Isenmila's family are blaming the Edo State Police Command for slothfulness in bringing his murderers to book. They are appealing to the Edo State Police

Commissioner, Mr. Bala Hassan and the Inspector-General of Police, Mr. Mike Okiro to re-open the case file and order a speedy investigation into the crime. *Saturday Vanguard* also spoke with the Edo State police to clear the deluge of allegation levelled against its from officers from the C.I.D. who are in charge of the matter. Mother of the deceased, Madam Otiti Ebadoloyi Isenmila-Iyoha spoke. Excerpts:

**How has life been, one year after the gruesome murder of your son?**

Life has been real terrible, my son. It has been terrible that up till now that those who killed my son have not been brought to book. Life has not been complete without Augustus, because he was my favourite child. I single-handedly trained him, before training the junior ones. I just want to use this medium to ask the society whether there is no justice again. I also want to use this medium to appeal to the Inspector-General of Police to look into this matter, and re-open the case file as a new Inspector-General of Police because from what I heard about you, you are a straightforward person. Since the death of my son, the Police in Edo State have not been forthcoming in their investigation into the issue. They even chase my children

Continues on Page 18

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*Continues from Page 14*

away whenever they go to them to know how far they have gone with the case. I just want the Inspector-General of Police to know what we have been going through in the hands of the Police in Edo State.

**You have just mentioned that the Edo State Police Command handling the murder case has not been forthcoming in their investigation. Have you informed the Commissioner of Police about this development?.**

**W**hen they reported this matter to the Police after he was murdered, they showed enthusiasm in the handling of the case, although people asked, why should they go the police because there was no justice with the police. I am not sure that the Commissioner of Police is aware of what his men and officers are doing to my children. But those directly in charge of this matter, that is, the homicide detectives in the Criminal Investigation Department (C.I.D.) are the ones who have refused to bring those suspected to have murdered my son to book, especially one man (name withheld), the culprit who allegedly lured people to kill my son. They told my children to start looking for the photograph of the said man. My children do not know the killers of my son, so if they know those who killed my son, they would not go to the Police. It was my children who provided vehicles to carry suspects; they were the ones spending money without any support, even from the NIFOR authorities. The police were not forthcoming. My children are tired. The most agonising aspect of the whole thing is that strange people phone them frequently to threaten their lives, that if they don't hands off this matter, they would go the same way of their late brother. I appeal to the Inspector-General of Police, Mr. Mike Okiro to do justice in this case, because I don't want any of my children to be killed by the same people who had already taken the life of my son, Augustus.

**Any assistance from NIFOR to the family he left behind?**

My son, even when my child died, I did not see anybody. Even the church people, I did not see any of them. If not for my children and other members of the family, I did not see anybody to come and console me. My son started working with them after his NYSC. He worked with them with faithfulness and good heart. He was a man of God. He never hurt anybody. All those who he worked with and was in contact with him say good things about my son. Although, I am not an educated woman at least I knew what they have said about my son, that my son was a straightforward man. A man of God who never hurt his fellowmen; he worked with them right from his youth. The question is, is this how to reward a man who worked harder for an organization like NIFOR? They neither came to see his children nor us; they never care whether he had an aged mother like me. They have abandoned us.

**Edo Police PRO, ASP Peter Ogbai, reacts:**

*This issue of the death of Dr.*

Augustus Isenmila, the Police, you will recall in conjunction with the then State Government and the family of Dr. Isenmila put a prize tag on the suspects and said that anybody who is able to give us information leading to the arrest of the suspects would be paid N500,000.00. This is against the amount of N100,000.00 promised by the family. That is a risk that the Police took because if today anybody is able to give information that would lead to the arrest, the Police will pay the balance of N400,000.00 and I think that is one of the things we have done. Secondly, you will agree that for the Commissioner of Police to personally visit the scene of crime is indeed a pointer to the fact that Police took that matter seriously. I would like to let you know that investigation is still on going, investigation into a case of murder is not something that without information you start picking people, releasing people and making innocent people to suffer. But of course, there was information reaching the police of a certain name and coincidentally, the police arrested somebody thinking that he was the person and that person bears the same name with the suspect. It happened that he was not the suspect.

**O**nce a suspect is being looked for, they are aware that the police was looking for a particular suspect, but unfortunately, whatever happened, they burgled it because the suspect happened to know that the police was looking for him. He left. We are yet to get the photograph of the suspect and even when the father of the suspect died, the police were there, thinking that perhaps he would show up for the burial of his father so that he would be picked up. Of course, he didn't show up. A very senior police officer led that team and we committed over 15 men for that task. That is to show you the seriousness and efforts we have actually put into unravelling the case.

Now when people accused the Police of not being serious, I asked, have you gotten information around the suspect and you told the Police and they are not doing anything. Investigations are not just a collaborative effort because while the Police are sourcing for information, you too also would be sourcing for information and get the information to the Police who would now do something. We are not magicians. We have been saying that. I am worried that the family could be accusing the Police of not taking interest in the case and that it appears that the Police knows something and they want to shield the suspect. Shielding who? What is the calibre of the suspect that people would be thinking that the police of shielding somebody? Why would the Police want to shield him? They said that we are not doing anything, and I also want to say that they, the family are not doing anything because we have told them if you have any information, let us have such information. I think that in trying to be emotional, which of course is their entitlement given the fact that they have lost a bread winner, they should not try to cast aspersions on the police and get to distrust those who are doing their jobs and I think in this case, the police, should demand kudos and they should be given kudos.