

'They killed my only child over handset'

•Do justice, bereaved mother pleads with Lagos police

On January 2, when the people were still celebrating the dawn of a new year, a 24-yr old man, the only child of his mother, lay dead after assailants hit him on the head with spiked stick.

Vanguard how the ugly incident happened.

His words: "On December 19, 2007, at about 9.00 p.m, I took my set to Makafo Hospital near our house at Seme in order to charge it. I was there until a woman at that hospital came to be delivered of a baby but the baby died and the woman started bleeding. I was scared, so I had to leave the hospital immediately. But when I came back to pick up my set, it was nowhere to be found. "So I accused the women there of taking my set and that they should produce it,

opposite our own compound. On getting there, the boy was not at home but we saw his wife and brought her to Makafo Hospital where the phone was stolen. The wife claimed she has not been in the house for some hours now, and when she was asked what husband does for a living she did not know but we held the woman that we must see her husband before she will be allowed to go back home but this late Aliu pleaded that Atasekoko (our big uncle) should let her go, so the woman left.

"Later that same day, at 11:00 p.m., we went back to Nnobi's house to look for him. When we got there, we saw two men sitting outside. We told them what we came for but they were aggressive; they started fighting us that we accused Nnobi of stealing handset. This result into a big fight in the process of which Aliu's set and that of one other boy that followed us were taken. And as the fight progressed, one of the men now took a stick with nail and hit Aliu on the head. Aliu ran home, shouting and calling uncle Atamaseko that they had broken his head.

"Aliu was taken to a clinic immediately for treatment. The next day, our uncle went to the community to ask that they produce the sets taken from us. Only one was produced. Nonetheless, Atamaseko settled the matter. On

December 29, Nnobi was brought to our house where one Chief Alfa Lamidi now held a peace meeting with us.

"To our surprise, on December 30, Aliu started convulsing, promoting us to rush him to the Badagry General Hospital. He was admitted immediately and it was confirmed that he was not given anti-tetanus injection the day he was hit on the head with nail. We



•Aliu's mother, Mrs. grace Attah...grieved by son's death

they said they did not take any set but that an Ibo boy known as Nnobi came there and that he was the only person that came there; so I should go and look for him.

"I now went to call my cousin Aliu and we went to the Nnobi's house at Ogborogbo, Seme just

started buying the drugs prescribed. On January 2, Saliu, Aliu's relation, had just gone to buy some of the expensive drugs prescribed when Aliu gave up the ghost at about 4.20p.m. at the hospital."

The Seriki of Ogborogbo where



•Bashiru Bilkisu, Aliu's first cousin

the incident happened, Prince Musiliu Toto, also spoke to *Sunday Vanguard*. According to him, Aliu was the fourth person to be killed by the assailants. He pleaded with the police authorities

in Lagos to ensure that the assailants were brought to book, saying that one of them was being detained at Seme police station over the killing.

Men seeking AIDS cure rape teenaged girls!

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took the war to the National Assembly and she has not relented on the war against these criminals in the society. Speaking with our correspondent in an interview, Hajiya Jummai Babangida Aliyu said she had been discussing the issue with her husband and assured that she will not relent in her effort to stem the crime in the state generally and in Suleja in particular. As a concrete step, she said her pet project, still in the offing, will take cognizance of the menace, saying, "most importantly is the setting up of an organization mainly to protect the girl-child and under this body, the campaign and war against rape will be strengthened and given adequate priority".

This menace has now become a major concern not only to the state government but to the people of Niger State. For example, some non-governmental organisations (NGO) have risen to the challenge and are now involved in enlightening, sensitization and mobilization of the people of the area to rise against the menace and the perpetrators of the crime. The NGOs include the Women's Right Advancement Protection Agency (WRAPA), founded by former first lady, Justice Fati Abubakar, and Association of Female Lawyers (FIDA). Similarly, the proprietress of Inspired International School, Kutunku, Gwagwalada in Abuja, Mrs. Grace Ima Ante, has personally embarked on enlightenment and sensitization of the public especially parents not to allow their children especially the females to be exploited by men but instead live a promising life.

School campaign

Ima, who is embarking on house to house and school to school campaign, is preaching the gospel of total abstinence from sex for youths in order not to fall victim to rapists, sensitize parents on the need to discuss issues of sex, HIV/ AIDs, rape and other relevant issues with their children. The issue of rape is better imagined than experienced. For those who have daughters or close relations as victims, it is described as the worst experiences of their lives. No wonder the mother of a victim simply called Amina described the "psychology and mental torture being experienced by her and her child as "worse than mourning or losing a dearest one".

Another victim (13-yr old girl), while narrating her ordeal in the hands of her rapists, described how a gang of five had their turns on her until she fainted and her virginal also mutilated. "I preferred to

die than to live after regaining my consciousness," the victim sobbed as she covered her face with a scarf. Tiffin also told a story of how a nine-year old girl was raped by a 45-year old Okada rider. The victim had to be rushed to the theatre for surgery because of the severity of her virginal mutilation. A more traumatic experience is of a three-year old child who was said to have been raped by a 65-year old man in October last year.

Another pathetic experience is that of a mother, simply called Hadiza, whose daughter was raped but who is now experiencing a twist in the case by the police who she said are not co-operating in prosecuting the rapists having fulfilled all "righteousness". There are more of these pathetic cases of rape already established in the state but allegedly without proper handling by the appropriate quarters for investigation and prosecution. Niger State Police Command has however promised to join hands with the state government and all other relevant bodies in fighting the menace by arresting culprits and charging them to court immediately. Rape is now becoming a national calamity. It is not only restricted to Niger State.

For example, a four-year old girl was reportedly raped by a middle aged man simply called Taiwo in an uncompleted building in Kubuwa town. He was said to have used a sharp stick to allow him easy penetration into the virginal of the innocent child. The girl's situation is said to be worsening as she has been referred to the Ahmadu Bello Teaching Hospital, Zaria but the parents said they cannot afford the medical bill. Parents of the suspect who are said to be wealthy are said to have taken steps to subvert justice.

In Gombe reports said there are no less than three cases of rape recorded by the police within a week involving very young females and old men. One Hauwa Ma'arufi, 9, was said to have been lured by one Mohammed Kabir, 40, of the same address into his sitting room and raped her. A security man with a primary school in the town, Usman Maishanu, 60, also raped one Maryam Lawal, 10, in one of the classrooms. Also, one 55-yr old Abba Mohammed confessed to raping two under aged - Khadija Abdullahi, 12, and Maryam Alhassan, 11, each on three occasions. With the menace spreading across the country, the question now is, who is going to be the next victim? Certainly, it could be anybody and this is why all concerned citizens of the country should rise against the rapists who are ravaging the country and

BLESSING BALOGUN

WHY did God allow this tragedy to befall me, lamented Mrs Grace Attah whose only child was killed at Ogorogbo area of Seme over a handset on January 2, when most people were celebrating the new year. It was the dream of Mrs Attah to see her only child become successful in life and also bear her grand children since she had made all possible effort to procreate more children without success until her beloved husband died last year. She had placed her trust in God as a good Christian, always praying for her only child to become many for her in future. She deprived herself of essential personal needs just to ensure that Aliu, 24, was properly taken care of. She was always thanking God and happy that, at least, she had a son who could take care of her when she is old.

"Aliu was my heart, my only child and my life but see what the wicked boys at Seme have done to me I don't know how to bear it, Aliu is gone." Mrs Grace could no longer continue the story, she burst into tears but Bashiru Bilkisu, the late Aliu's first cousin, narrated to *Sunday*