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Unsolved murder of journalists

[Editorial](#) Sep 24, 2009

On Sallah day, Monday 21st of September 2009, Nigerians woke up to the sad news of the brutal murder of Mr Bayo Ohu, an Assistant Political Editor with The Guardian Newspapers in his Akowonjo suburb home a day earlier.

According to reports, the gunmen entered his house in the morning while the family was preparing for church and shot him several times at point blank range.

This adds to the mounting number of journalists killed, especially in Lagos. Since the late founding Editor-in-Chief of Newswatch Magazine, Mr Dele Giwa was killed through a parcel bomb in 1986, hardly has a year passed without members of the Fourth Estate of the Realm losing at least one of their members to murderers. The most recent cases were those of Omololu Falobi of the PUNCH Newspapers, who until his death was the Executive Director of the Journalists Against Aids (JAAIDS) in October 2006.

Later that same year as the world prepared for the Christmas festivities, the Chairman of the Editorial Board of THISDAY Newspapers and one of its columnists, Godwin Agbroko, was shot dead on his way home from work on the darkened Oshodi-Apapa Expressway on December 22, 2006.

Just a little over a year ago, another member of THISDAY Editorial Board, Abayomi Ogundeji, was killed at Dopemu, near Akowonjo on his way home from work on August 17th 2008. In the 1990's there were a number of celebrated murder of journalists in which Krees Imodibie of The Guardian and Tayo Awotunsin of Champion Newspapers were eliminated in Liberia when they went there in the heat of the civil war.

And in 1996, Bagauda Kaltho, an ace reporter with The News Magazine, which was openly opposed to the annulment of the June 12 presidential mandate of Chief Moshood Abiola, disappeared in the custody of the security agencies. The common denominator in all these cases is that in not a single instance were the masterminds of these homicides ever identified and brought to book.

The life of a journalist is often glamorous. Those who are a little outstanding on a daily basis receive tons of commendations from their reading or viewing public. However, just as there are many admirers there are also those who nurture grievances over the journalist's acts of omission or commission because every story, article or feature written by a journalist affects interests one way or the other.

People react to the work of journalists in different ways when rubbed the wrong way. Some bear it with fortitude. Some take the civilised conventional path by writing rejoinders which by professional obligation the target media publish. Some go to court to assert their rights if they feel libelled. It is a very few members of the society, the desperados, that decide to take the law into their own hands and settle matters their own way by deploying the services of assassins.

It is a pity that this segment of the society that chooses to toe the path of lawlessness has never for once been made to know that crime does not pay. Nothing has ever happened to create deterrence. The unsolved murders of journalists only add to other unsolved murders involving other citizens, especially politicians. We live in a society where life is cheap and journalists are free targets.

The media must do more to focus attention on the rising menace against their members. Newspapers and magazines no longer treat the killing of journalists the way Dele Giwa's murder was focused on. Murder is losing its news-making clout among Nigerian media, even when it involves one of their own.

They no longer follow up investigations. That is sad. The law enforcement agencies respond to events depending on attention the media pay them. If media do not consider the murder of a member of their profession news enough, who will?



2 Responses for “Unsolved murder of journalists”

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[September 24, 2009 at 2:58 am](#)

RIP

2. *BOBAJIRO* says:
[September 24, 2009 at 1:32 am](#)

One would like to know what Babangida and his boys think about the above editorial.

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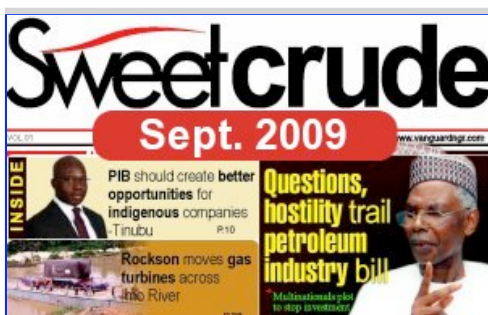
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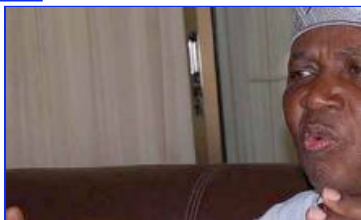


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