

Family of nine killed in Lagos gas explosion buried in Anambra

By Vincent Ujumadu

AWKA—THE sleepy community of Azia in Ihiala Local Government Area of Anambra State was in mournful mood yesterday as the nine bodies of the family of Charles Obidigwe, who died of burns sustained from cooking gas explosion in Lagos last month, were buried.

Mrs. Obidigwe, wife of Charles, was said to be preparing lunch for the family when the gas cylinder exploded and caught fire that engulfed the entire flat.

When men of Lagos State Fire Service arrived, the harm had been done.

The head of the family, Charles Obidigwe, 51, died instantly. But the other eight members of his family, including his sister-in-law and her son, who were staying with them, died later in a Lagos hospital.

Until his death, late Obidigwe operated a medicine store in Lagos.

When news of their death reached Azia, their home town, the community was thrown into mournful mood and it remained

so until their bodies were brought a fortnight ago and buried, while funeral rites were accorded them yesterday.

Their graves littered the premises of Charles Obidigwe's uncompleted building like a mini cemetery.

His sister-in-law and her son, who also lost their lives in the incident, were buried in another village in the town where she was married.

Markets shut

As a mark of respect for the deceased family, all the markets in Azia were closed and all other burial ceremonies in the community were cancelled to enable the community give the Obidigwe family a befitting burial.

Though attendance was not made compulsory for the people of the community, the Obidigwe country home at Nkwankwa village in Azia was packed full with sympathisers from all the villages in the town.

Tears flowed freely as women, men and children sobbed for hours.

In a homily delivered at the church service held in Obidigwe compound, the

officiating priest, Rev. Fr. Jude Unigwe of St. Anthony's Catholic Parish, Azia, urged the people not to question why the entire family had to perish at once, adding that it was only God that had the answer.

He told the people to be ready for their own death at all times by living a good life as nobody knew when death would come knocking and how it would come.

Sales rep bags 3 years in jail over N2.3m theft

By Onozure Dania

LAGOS—MAGISTRATE K. O. Ogundare of a Lagos Chief Magistrate's Court, sitting at Murtala Muhammed International Airport, yesterday, sentenced a salesman, Azeez Williams, to three years imprisonment without an option of fine.

The convict, who is 30 year old, was found guilty of stealing the sum of N2.3 million.

The convict was arraigned before the court sometimes in July 2013, on charges bordering on conspiracy and stealing.

The offences are punishable

The deceased elder brother, Mr. Livinus Obidigwe, said: "We cannot question God. My brother was very hard working and he was loved by many in this community.

"The only thing I can say is that their souls should rest in peace."

Late Charles' youngest brother, Chimezie Odidiegwu, said he lacked words to express his feelings.

under Sections 409 and 285 of the Criminal Laws of Lagos State, 2011.

During the trial of the convict, the prosecutor informed the court that the convict had conspired with others still at large to steal different head ties valued N2,381,000 from the shop of one Mrs. Adenike Balogun, situated at 33, Kosoko Street, Lagos Island, where he was a sales representative.

The prosecutor had called two witnesses, the convict's boss, Balogun and Corporal Adeyemo Olubunmi the Investigation Police officer

the crime, including the hotelier, and the victim Saki Fulani is now in our custody."

The victim, Sani, said he was abducted at Ogbomoso, adding that he ate rice for the period he was in captivity.

The police commissioner added that Sani's abductors demanded a ransom of N1 million and that if he failed to produce it, he would be killed.

The hotelier, Olatunji Kabiru, who owns the hotel where the kidnappers used, denied knowledge of the crime.

He said the kidnappers had deposited N5,000.

from CIID, who investigated the crime.

Delivering judgment in the suit, Magistrate Ogundare discharged the convict of the conspiracy allegation, saying that the prosecution failed to prove his case beyond reasonable doubt.

However, he was found guilty of the stealing charge, and consequently sentenced to three years imprisonment without an option of fine.

The magistrate also ordered that the convict's landed property be confiscated and disposed as restitution for the crime against the complainant.