

Vanguard

Mysterious tree collapses, kills 4 in Enugu community

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By Chinenyeh Ozor

Nsukka—A mysterious ukwuakpu tree collapsed in Obollo- Afor community and claimed four lives which includes a nursing mother and her one year old baby at the busy Obollo-Afor market in Udenu local government area of Enugu state.

The tree which was said to have lived for over 150 years in the area collapsed following a heavy storm, killing four people instantly while several others sustained various degrees of injuries and were receiving treatment at St. Theresea's hospital in the area.

An eye witness to the collapsed tree told Vanguard that, none of the inhabitants of Umuakpu, Umuezejor community, where the mysterious tree lived for over 150 years can give an account of the tree as all of them grew up and met the tree standing as big as it was before it finally collapsed.

The huge ukwuakpu tree allegedly measuring about 20ft collapsed on a palm oil packing store and a food restaurant, killing the nursing mother hawking banana, identified simply as Ijeoma Ojobor and her one year old baby Chibueze Ojobor; one mechanic identified as Romanus Eze along Enugu-Makurdi expressway and two others.

It took the intervention of Udenu police division and a wood sawyer to exhume the corpse of the mechanic trapped by the tree. The proprietor of the restaurant identified as Somuadina and one Obetta Ikechukwu were both left with broken legs and other injuries while the brother to the restaurant owner who assisted her in the business died on the spot.

A 70 year old man who pleaded anonymity told Vanguard at the scene of the incident that he grew up in the community and met the tree standing. It was said to be the centre for masquerade festivals, and relaxation for both the community and travellers alike but unknown to anybody that it has lived beyond expectation in the area.

Vanguard who visited the scene of the incident gathered that the stem of the tree pierced the one year old baby through the neck and came out at the other side of the baby while her mother was thrown to a different location where she was later found dead at the scene of the incident.

Reports revealed that every year at the spot of the ukwuapku tree, automobile accidents had been claiming four lives only for the tree to collapse and also claim four lives.

Amidst wailing and confusion to the surprised collapse of the tree, the tap roots of the tree were said to have reportedly

decayed for decades which was why the tree collapsed during a heavy storm on that fateful day .

Enugu state Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), DSP Ebere Amarizu warned residents and inhabitants of the state to be weary of trees in their surroundings and offices to avoid future occurrences.

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