

Police, pastor to pay N20m over killing of 22-yr-old student over missing musical equipment

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UMUAHIA—For allegedly killing 22-year-old Vincent Uwagbaokwu, the Police and Pastor Martins of the Christ Empire International Church, Umuahia, Abia State, have been ordered to pay N20 million to the late student's family.

The order was given by an Umuahia High Court presided over by Justice Kenneth Okereke in a judgment delivered in a suit filed by the father of the deceased, Mr. Emmanuel Uwagbaokwu.



Vincent Uwagbaokwu, a student of Imo State Polytechnic, Umuagwo, was shot dead by the Police on the night of September 10, 2015, on the allegation that he stole musical instruments belonging to the church.

Mr. Ikechukwu Ogbonna, church deacon, and the four Police officers, ex-Sergeant Ogbonna Alieze, Sergeant Eyong Inah, Corporal Obi Chimbuike and Constable Okafor Ugochukwu, said to have been invited by Pastor Martins of Christ Empire International Church, invaded the family home of the Uwagbaokwus at Ohobe Afara, Ibeku, Umuahia North Local Government at night and killed the student.

His father, Mr. Emmanuel Uwagbaokwu, then dragged the Police and the pastor to court for unlawful murder of his son.

Judgment

In his judgement, Justice Okereke indicted the Police for the killing and ordered them to jointly pay N20 million as compensation to the family of the deceased.

Justice Okereke held that the respondents failed to justify the killing of Vincent Uwagbaokwu, who was not even the suspect in the alleged stealing of the church property and was not armed at the time the Police invaded their home.

“Vincent Ikechukwu Uwagbaokwu died an innocent man,” Justice Okereke said and regretted that till date none of those involved in his killing has shown remorse and apologised.

He said that the judgement will serve as deterrent to policemen, who feel they could take life at will just because they are armed.

He also ordered that the pastor and all the policemen involved in the illegal operation be arraigned in court for murder of the late student.

The father of the deceased, Mr. Emmanuel Uwagbaokwu, said he was happy with the judgement because the court has vindicated his son, who was killed and tagged a criminal by police and Pastor Martins.

“The court has proved that my late son, Vincent, was not an armed robber and was innocently killed by the Police on the orders of the pastor, who illegally engaged them,” Uwagbaokwu said.

Meanwhile, the indicted persons are to be arraigned in court today as the Attorney-General of the state has already filed information against the pastor, Deacon Ogbonna and the four policemen on a two-count charge of conspiracy to murder and murder of Vincent Uwagbaokwu.