

# Man beats ex-wife to death over custody of children 'maltreated by step-mother'

By Evelyn Usman

**L**AGOS—A 40-year-old man, Matthew Okezie, has been arrested for beating his former wife to death during an argument over the custody of their two children at the woman's residence in Kuje, Amuwo Odofin Local Government Area of Lagos State.

Vanguard gathered that the couple separated six years ago.

The man, left with two of their children, leaving two others in the custody of his estranged wife, Abeni, 35.

However, their eldest son, aged 15 years, was said to have left his father's house at Awoyaya, Ajah, accompanied by his younger sister, for their mother's place, last week.

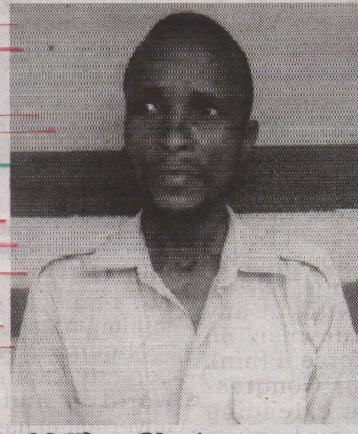
The children alleged that their step-mother was maltreating them.

When their father got wind of their whereabouts, he stormed Abeni's house on Tuesday night to take them back.

However, the children, according to eyewitnesses, pleaded in tears to be allowed to stay with their mother. Infuriated, Okezie was said to have beaten the children and attempted to forcefully take them away.

In the process, their mother rose to their defence, insisting that the children should be allowed to stay with her. This resulted in a quarrel, which degenerated into a fight.

In the process, Okezie allegedly hit his estranged wife



Matthew Okezie

in the chest, causing her to slump. She was rushed to an undisclosed hospital, where she died yesterday.

Lagos State Police Public

Relations Officer, DSP Elkana Bala, who confirmed the incident, disclosed that the suspect's younger sister, Sarah, was also arrested for complicity in the matter.

DSP Bala said: "One of the children reported to the Police at about 9p.m. on Tuesday that her father had beaten their mother to stupor. Consequently, policemen at Satellite Division rushed to the scene and apprehended the man, while the woman was rushed to the hospital.

"But she died today (yesterday). The man will be transferred to the State Criminal Investigations and Intelligence Department, SCIID, for further investigation, from where he would be charged to court.