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Two years after my husband was abducted, murdered, killers still walking freely—Widow laments

ON MAY 9, 2020 6:33 AM / IN [CRIME GUARD](#) /

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*IGP ADAMU*

- **Arrested suspect allegedly sneaked out of police net**
- **RULAAC reacts, calls for IGP's intervention**
- **Suspect rearrested, in our custody—— Police**

By Evelyn Usman

A cloud of gloom descended on Mrs Sylvia Okoye, on December 16, 2018, following the discovery of the remains of her late husband, Okoye Angus, 48, in a bush near Nawgu community in Dunukofia Local Government Area of Anambra State.

The previous day, some persons, alleged to be well known to members of her family, stormed her late husband's home in Isuaniocha community, at about 11pm and bundled him away. His scream for help rented the air, but no one came to his rescue until his piercing and high-pitched cries gradually faded into echo.

Crime Guard gathered that the deceased had sneaked into his home which was in ruins, owing to an earlier attack, to give his pregnant wife some money for

antenatal and home keep but did not meet her, as she was at his brother's.

But for providence, same fate would have befallen the pregnant woman, who was heading home to meet her husband, but was forced to retrace her steps few poles to the house upon noticing some uninvited guests.

She watched helplessly, from the cover of the dark, as her husband was taken away. She rushed to inform his relatives who tried all they could to trace the assailants, to no avail until the body was discovered next day. That devastating act has since saddled the woman with the responsibility of taking care of their six children alone.

Genesis

His crime? He was alleged to have been killed because of his daring mien in village politics. He was accused as the brain behind an allegation of misappropriation of funds against one Anthony, who was President General of Isuanocha community and also, for instigating youths in the community to demand the Town Union's statement of account, to ascertain how money was spent by Anthony, a move that never augured well to those loyal to the President General.

Narrating the unkind fate that befell their family, the deceased's brother, Elder George Okoye, said, "youths have been having issues in the community but my brother was always the target. His crime was simply because he refused to support the President General of Isuanocha community, who was accused of financial misappropriation"

He recalled how in 2017, the deceased supported Anthony in the campaign that brought him as President General of the community, a position said to be next to the traditional ruler's.

Things however fell apart for both men whose friendship dated back to when they were in Ghana, as Anthony, was alleged to be interfering in the affairs of youths by trying to impose a leader on them, a move the youths reportedly resisted. During the resistance, late Angus, who was the Youths' Vice President, was again accused of spearheading the revolt.

Another accusation leveled against the deceased was the invasion of Anthony's house by angry youths following the kidnap of the Youth Chairman, Oyemazi Igini, two years ago. The angry youths were said to have threatened to burn down Anthony's house if the abducted chairman was not released, as they alleged he was kept in the house.

Elder George added "There has been several problems in the village. For instance, in November 2018, some hired thugs invaded my late brother's home, destroyed his property and injured his houseboy. Fortunately, my late brother was not at home. The hit men also unleashed mayhem on one Chidiebere, a youth who challenged Anthony for insulting an old man at a meeting. In that meeting, Anthony had threatened to dissolve the Youth and Vigilante Group, which prompted youths to request for the Town Union's account from him, before dissolving their group.

After the meeting, Chidiebere was knocked down by a car as he stepped out of a petrol station. The hoodlums who was with their sponsor, inflicted machet cuts on him and also fired some shots at him, abandoning him to die. Fortunately for Chidiebere, who was a footballer that was preparing to leave for Europe, he regained consciousness three days after the attack at the hospital he was rushed to", Elder George stated.

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Six persons were said to have been arrested in connection with the attack on Chidiebere , and were reportedly supposed to be arraigned on November 26, 2019, only to be discovered to have been released three days earlier.

Another attack

Unfortunately for late Angus, he could not escape the second attack when his assailants came calling, barely one month after the first.

Recalling the sad moment, his widow said, “I watched from my vantage position as these men, six in number, who were the same persons that attacked our home one month earlier, forcefully dragged my husband along. He was blindfolded”, she said amid tears.

Aggrieved youths in the community, reportedly stormed homes of the suspected killers but discovered that they had disappeared.

Initial attempt by the bereaved family to prosecute the alleged perpetrators met brick wall as the bereaved family alleged that the Police in Anambra foot-dragged in wading in until the Inspector-General of Police was petitioned.

Eventually, three persons were arrested , a year after the incident. One of them was Anthony, while another was one Moses, whose passport photograph was reportedly discovered where the body of Angus was disposed.

But the family’s hope of getting justice was frustrated as news filtered in last month, that the suspects had been released under questionable circumstances.

In a petition to the DIG Federal Criminal Investigation Department, spokesman for the bereaved family, Elder Okoye, said, “A long drawn investigation by officer Amuche, was frustrated by a former DC now CP in-charge of Homicide.

“We were ridiculed as a poor family while our brother’s dead body lies in the mortuary till date. God touched your heart, out of our prayers, we received a call from the IPO Bitrus sometime in September 2019, who said you invited us to revisit our case under DC Anyim. We were reluctant because we knew the end would be like this, under the same Ayim, now CP in the same case. But we were later convinced by Bitrus to come which we did and the suspects were eventually arrested a year after the murder, for the first time.

“After concluding the investigation by the IPO under the same CP Ayim, the case was again killed in connivance with the CP Legal just like to the fear I expressed earlier. Right now the murderers are enjoying freedom without going to court having been released the midnight of April 20,2020, in suspected circumstance. Sir, where is your promise that the deceased family will get justice?. Worst still, the case file was emptied by your legal men in connivance with the CP in order to get soft landing in the court”.

RULAAC’s reaction

Reacting to news of the release of the suspects, Executive Director, Rule of Law and Accountability Advocacy Centre, RULAAC, Mr Okechukwu Nwagunma, said, “ RULAAC received the information that the murder suspect who was recently transferred from Homicide Section, FCID, Force Headquarters, Abuja to Anambra Police Headquarters, Awka at the conclusion of investigation and detained pending arraignment in Awka for murder, had been released by the OC Legal Anambra Command at midnight, on the directives of the CP Legal, Force Headquarters, in what appears like a clandestine operation. We were also told that the case file has been ‘seriously tampered with’ and compromised.

“Upon receiving this information, RULAAC first made contacts with the SCID Awka and confirmed that the suspect was actually released at odd hours but without the knowledge of the Commissioner of Police, Anambra.

“RULAAC made several calls, sent text and WhatsApp messages to Mr. Austin Sanomia, CP Legal, Force Headquarters, Abuja to verify the information that he ordered the release and to understand why, but has received no answer or reply till the time of issuing this alert.

“RULAAC, therefore, calls on the IGP to order a prompt, exhaustive and effective investigation into this incident, with a view to determining the grounds and motive, if any, upon which an accused person awaiting arraignment for murder could be released at midnight and to determine whether indeed, case file has been tampered with as alleged. Appropriate remedial and disciplinary actions should be taken”.

However, at the time of writing this report, Crime Guard reliably gathered that the DIG, FCIID, DIG Ogbizi , gave a 48-hour ultimatum for the re-arrest and immediate prosecution of the suspects alleged to have been released, when news of the release reached him.

Contacts made revealed that the suspects were reportedly rearrested on May 1, 2020 and were in Police custody. Further checks showed that one of them, Anthony, would be charged to court, for the pending attempted murder charge case of Chidiebere, at the High Court, Anambra state.

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