

Youths kill worker with magical ring, cut another's thumb in A'lbom •My son's death so painful— Bereaved mother

AKWA IBOM... LAND OF PROMISE

By Chioma Onuegbu

ODIONO ISOUTIBE - THERE is pandemonium at Odiono Isoutibe village, Okpum Ete clan, Ikot Abasi Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State, following the killing of a 34-year-old youth, Obot Akpan Ben, with suspected charmed ring by four assailants.

Assailants escape after havoc
NDV investigation revealed that the four assailants, who are also youths of the area, escaped from the community immediately after the incident, few weeks ago.

How they attacked us – Pius, eyewitness/co-worker

An eyewitness and the deceased's co-worker at Sterling Petrochemical & Fertilizers Limited located in Okopedi Ete community, Ikot Abasi LGA, Tracy Pius, lamented that he narrowly escaped machete cut by the assailants during the incident.

Pius narrated: "About 7.30 am on our way to work that day, we saw that the road leading to our company was blocked by some youths, they were four in number. When we stopped to ask why they blocked the road, they started attacking us."

They cut my thumb

"They succeeded in cutting my thumb with a machete because all of them were with machetes and

other weapons. When one cut my thumb, I was bleeding but one of my friends who saw me rushed me to a chemist where I was treated.

Obot hit with charmed ring

"But one hit Obot and he fell down and lost consciousness. So when those four saw that many commercial motorcyclists have gathered at the scene to know what happened to Obot, those boys ran away. They hit him with a finger ring suspected to be a charmed ring," he said.

Mother weeps

But teary-eyed mother of the deceased and trader, Mrs. Mfon Akpan Ben, lamented: "He was my last born child. I have been living with him under this same roof. I named him Obot after me, that is to show you how much I love that my son. I never knew I would lose my last born in such manner."

The 77-year-old widow and mother of six, disclosed: "And he just started work at that company, about three months ago. After suffering to train my child, they just killed him in cold blood. It is so painful, I do not think I can recover from this shock.

"On the morning they killed him, we woke up from sleep and he started preparing to go to work. He was just sitting outside the house here tying his shoes when one boy ran to the house and started shouting his name (Obot) come ooo, about four youths have blocked the road leading to the company to prevent workers from going to work.

"My boy immediately climbed a motorcycle to the scene where the youths barricaded the road. About 15 minutes after Obot left the house,

another boy ran to the compound shouting, and started calling my second son, Udeme, to come that his younger brother is dead, that they have killed him.

"I was collecting firewood behind the house when I heard that, I dropped the firewood and ran out, only to hear that my son has been murdered in cold blood. That was the last time I saw my boy. Since 2018 when my husband died, he has been living with me here.

"He leaves from here to work every morning, why would anybody kill my son? He did not have any issue with anybody in this community, which is why I still do not understand why those people decided to kill him.

"I am appealing to relevant government authorities, especially the security agencies, to ensure the killers of my son are brought to book. I demand justice for my son. He was a gentle boy," she said.

Elder brother dumbfounded

Elder brother to the deceased, Udeme, told NDV: "We are not angry that he died but we are angry because of the circumstances that led to his death, it was a cold-blooded murder. My mother and my siblings are still in shock. Obot was the last born of the family.

"When they called me to tell me that day that my brother was dead, I asked how? Was it an accident? The person said no it was not an accident, so I picked a motorcycle and followed him to the place where it happened.

"When I got to the scene, I was told that some motorcyclists have already rushed him to a hospital. When I got to the hospital, I saw people crying and I asked what happened? The hospital said there

was nothing that they could do. After taking him to two other health clinics, they also confirmed that he was already dead.

Search for charmed ring

"And as we were there confused, one of those assailants called someone to inform us that we should not take him to the mortuary because he was not dead yet.

"He said that the ring one of them used to hit Obot fell down at the scene of incident and that people should go there to look for the ring so that he could be revived. So everybody moved to the said spot in search of the ring, scattered the whole place, but we did not see any ring. But at about 2:30pm same day, my brother gave up the ghost."

Wicked to kill Obot, Essien, ex-youth president

Contacted, a former Ete clan youth president, Ubong Essien, condemned the incident, saying that it was wrong for them to go to that length of killing a fellow youth as a way of expressing their grievances for not securing job at the company.

"The information I got from the community is that the four youths went to block the Shell Road leading to Okopedi-Ete Road where the Fertilizer Company is situated, protesting that the company should also employ them.

"I think that was why they got angry when the deceased asked why they blocked the road leading to the company. But it was wrong for them to have killed someone when they could have adopted other peaceful means to seek for job in the company. And I appeal to our youths not to resort to violence while trying to make their demands," Essien said.