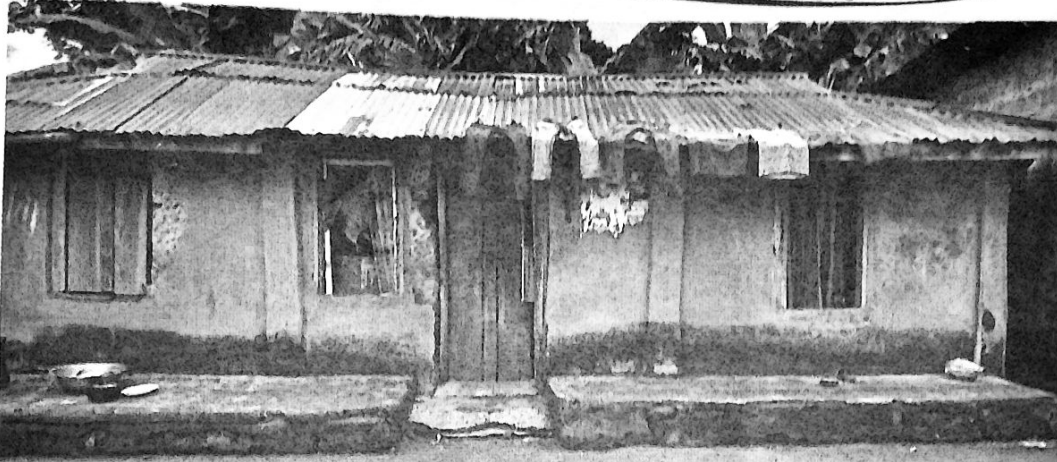


# Human Extra



•His family house

## ANAMBRA INSECURITY: I lost 2 sons in one month, laments mother of 25-yr old mechanic killed by security operatives

By Vincent Ujumadu

**F**IFTY EIGHT year-old Mrs. Helen Udoh from Abatete in Idemili North local government area of Anambra State is, indeed, in great agony. Exactly one month after her first son died mysteriously, her second son, Uchenna (25), a mechanic based at Abatete and a father three, was shot dead by security operatives on the allegation that he belonged to a cult group. The devastated 58-year-old woman while narrating the pathetic story to Saturday Vanguard said her world has been turned upside down because the late Uchenna was the breadwinner for her entire household.

She said: "On that Monday, I called Uchenna who doesn't usually go out on sit-at-home days to call his siblings to ensure they remained indoors. I also informed him that my blood pressure drugs had finished and he told me he would buy them in the evening that Monday.

"At 3.00pm while I was praying Divine Mercy with my granddaughter in the farm, we started hearing gunshots in Abatete, but we didn't know where it was taking place. I immediately called my son Uchenna again on phone but he didn't pick. I also called his wife and she also didn't pick. As I was returning home with my granddaughter, I called Uchenna again to ask him not to bother coming because I was hearing gunshots in the town. Surprisingly, someone picked the phone and told me that my son had been killed. I started cursing that person at the other end and he switched off the phone. I continued to call the number, but it remained switched off and it has been so till now.

"At home I went outside to know what was happening only for people to be hiding their faces on sighting me. That Monday was exactly one month Uchenna's immediate elder brother died. He just said he was having chest pain and suddenly collapsed and died.

"Look at our dilapidated house and Uchenna had told me he was to bring N280,000 for me to start renovating the house which has been leaking, but those who killed him took the money after killing him. They also set ablaze his motorcycle and batteries in his workshop. A woman who saw what happened told me that they shot him on his right arm and as he was running into a nearby compound, they shot him dead despite his shouting that he is a mechanic.

"He has three children and they have been falling sick since their father was killed. I have been managing to buy drugs for them, but how long can I provide for his family because he is the breadwinner of the whole family.

"Everybody in Abatete knows that my son is a mechanic and it is very annoying for people to insinuate that he was a cultist. I can swear to anything that he did not belong to any cult group because he is my son. He was a very hardworking mechanic and did not have time for any distraction. He is one of the best mechanics in Abatete which was why he was always busy. I am approaching 58 years and look at what is happening to me.

Uchenna's wife, Chinenye, 23, said someone had called her husband on that Monday morning to come and fix his vehicle that broke down somewhere, adding that he left for the job with the N280,000 he



•Chinedu's wife

my husband was already dead.

"They asked me to prepare so we would go out. As we were outside, I saw many people and when I asked why many people were on the road, they then told me that security people had killed my husband. I ran to the house and was told that youths were demonstrating in the town with his body. His phone and that money he went out with were taken and up till now, his phone is still switched off."

Chinenye said she was recently learning hairdressing, adding that her husband had already assured her that he would give her money to set up the business before the end of this month. Now he had left us. I have three children aged six, four and the last one is just above one year and without my husband, I don't know what will become of their future.

She added: "My husband is not a cultist. He was always in his workshop. Once he dropped the children in school and me at the place I was learning hairdressing, he would go to his workshop and return straight from work. Since his death, my children have been asking about their father and I have been telling them that he went to work. Anytime a vehicle comes into our compound, they would rush out thinking it was their father and I wonder how long they would do that before realizing that their father is no longer alive. In this family, my husband was the breadwinner and I wonder how we will all cope without him."

Following the murder of Uchenna, youths of Abatete took to the major roads in the area and protested with the corpse round the four quarters of the town. They complained that Uchenna and one other youth shot earlier might not have died if leaders of the community had empowered the youths of the community. The protest led to the arrest of 14 of them by the police and all of them are to appear in court on July 12 at the Ogidigbo Chief Magistrate Court.

One of the leaders of the community, Chief Emmanuel Nwachukwu, who is the Obi of Ogbu Quarters in the town said there is a leadership gap in the community because the traditional ruler, his prime minister and the President General are all living abroad and there is nobody to coordinate governance in the community.

Nwachukwu said: "It is lack of quality leadership that is responsible for the insecurity in our community. What should our people expect when the traditional ruler of Abatete and the traditional prime minister live in America, while the President General lives in Delta State?

"If they are around, they would have addressed and appeased our youths when they embarked on protests following the killing of two of their colleagues by security operatives. But because there was nobody to address them, the youths paraded with

a dead body in the villages only to be later arrested.

"There was a similar killing in the past and nothing was done, which was perhaps why the youths said they could no longer endure it. And it was after the protest that many of them were arrested by the police and most of them remained in detention for more than two weeks on allegation of malicious damage.

earlier asked me to keep because, as he said, he would go home from there to give it to his mother to pay for some building materials for the renovation of their house.

She said: "It was, my sister and her husband who came and informed me that they were calling my husband, but his number was switched off. I told them that he went to work somewhere and that he would return later, not knowing that my husband was already dead. Few minutes later, my sister-in-law came and said that my husband was sick and had been taken to hospital. I still could not imagine that