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Nigeria: 'Killing at Will' - Cases

The following cases are extracted from the report *Nigeria: Killing at will – extrajudicial executions and other unlawful killings*. For more detailed information on the cases, please refer to the full report. Interviews are available with relatives of some of the victims in the cases.

← **Chibuike Anams**, a student aged 23, was sitting with two friends at a guesthouse in Elingbu, Rivers State on 24 July 2009. When the police raided the guest house, he attempted to escape and was shot and died on the spot. Chibuike Anams' family reported him missing at the Police Headquarters in Port Harcourt after he failed to come home. They found out about his death almost a week later after they had visited several police stations. The family do not know why the police shot Chibuike Anams, or what crime he was suspected of. There has been no investigation into his death. In the meantime, the police have refused to release the body – it is still lying in the mortuary.

← **Ken Niweigha** was arrested on 26 May 2009. He was brought to the State Criminal Investigation Department (State CID) in Yenagoa, and paraded in front of the media. According to the police, Ken Niweigha had agreed to show them his hideout and then tried to escape and was killed. Amnesty International's research shows that it is unlikely Ken Niweigha was taken out of State CID detention. It is believed he died at the State CID. Eyewitnesses say that he was shot in the leg and in the ribs, and beaten in the neck area. His body was taken to Federal Medical Centre in Yenagoa and was buried in an undisclosed location by the authorities. The day after his arrest the police reportedly returned to his house and burnt his documents and his laptop.

← **Aneke Okorie**, a 39-year-old Okada (motorcycle taxi) rider and a father of four, failed to pay a bribe to the police at a checkpoint in Emene, Enugu on 15 May 2009. He was shot and later died on his way to the hospital. An eyewitness told Amnesty International that the police officer shot Aneke Okorie in the stomach and then hanged his gun around his neck, to suggest that the police officer was attacked by an "armed robber". The eyewitness was asked not to speak to the media. However, when radio reports in Enugu state claimed the police had killed an "armed robber", the eyewitness and community leaders wrote a petition to the IGP saying that Aneke Okorie was innocent and asking for the perpetrators to be brought to justice. Three police officers who were involved in the shooting were arrested as a result. In September one police officer was dismissed and prosecuted; he is currently awaiting trial. The body was released to the family for burial in September, following a post mortem examination. The post mortem report has not been released to the family.

←**Steven Agbanyim**, aged 29, and **Chidi Odinauwa**, aged 26, were arrested on 18 April 2009. The police confirmed to their relatives that the two men were in police custody in Borokiri Police Station, Port Harcourt. Steven Agbani was last seen by his family in police detention at Borokiri station on 27 April. On 7 May, SARS at Borokiri denied any knowledge of the whereabouts of the two men. “If Steven and Chidi have done a bad thing, let them charge them to court,” said one of Agbanyim’s relatives. “If the police have killed him, we want the body.” Police officers have informally told the families that the two men have been killed.

←On 7 April 2009 the police stopped the car of **Chika Ibeku** (29), **Gabriel Ejoor Owoicho** (29), **Precious Odua** (27) and two others. They were arrested and detained at Omoku Police station, Rivers State. They all informed their families of their arrest. On 8 April, **Johnson Nnaemeka** (39), the owner of the car, was questioned at Omoku Police Station. He was arrested on 9 April, and his house was searched. That same day, all six men were taken to the Swift Operation Squad (SOS) in Old GRA, Port Harcourt. Police officers at SOS confirmed their detention. Their families were not allowed to see them after their transfer. On 11 April, police officers at SOS claimed the men were transferred to SARS. Officers at SARS denied this. To date, the whereabouts of the six men are unknown.

←**Christian Onuigbo**, aged 28 and a father of one, died on 21 March 2009. Two days earlier, on 19 March, he was shot by the police while parking his car in Jiwa, FCT. He spent the night at Jiwa police station and was taken to hospital the next morning. Staff at the hospital refused to treat him without a police report, which was finally submitted at 4pm. Christian Onuigbo died the following day. Although his body is still in the hospital’s mortuary, the authorities have not carried out an autopsy. In July 2009, the House of Representatives Committee on Public Petitions ordered an investigative hearing into the circumstances of his death. No date has yet been set for this hearing.

Christian Ugwuoke was attending a wake and procession for his late aunt when he was killed on 27 January 2009. According to eyewitnesses, a police officer in a police patrol vehicle from Suleja Area Command shot at the peaceful crowd of approximately 50 people without prior warning. He seriously injured two people and killed Christian Ugwuoke. Eyewitnesses could not tell why the police officer had fired into the crowd. Christian Ugwuoke was taken to the Suleja Area Commander’s office. The police did not explain what happened, and did not let Christian Ugwuoke’s family know who killed him.

←**Boma Augustine Fingsesi** was arrested by the police on 15 October 2008. He was taken to the State Intelligence and Investigation Bureau (SIIB) in Port Harcourt and paraded in front of journalists as a suspected kidnapper. He was last seen by his family on the day of his arrest. When his family inquired about his whereabouts, the police claimed he was no longer in detention and that he had been released on bail. There was no document to confirm his release and the police could not say who had bailed him.

←“The police then changed their story and said that he had never been brought to the police station,” said a relative. “They have forgotten that all the papers covered the story. On 13 January 2009, the court granted Boma Augustine Fingsesi bail. However, the police did not release him and no explanation was received. To date, there has been no sign of Boma Augustine Fingsesi.”

← On 1 October 2008, police officers of the Lagos State Rapid Response Squad shot **Modebayo Awosika** in the head and then set his car on fire. An autopsy showed that he had died of a gunshot. The police told the Coroner that Modebayo Awosika's car hit the police patrol vehicle. One of the police officers shot at the car as "the driver... was suspected to be a robber". According to the police, the vehicle crashed into a ditch and caught fire. The five police officers on duty that night were reportedly transferred to undisclosed locations. The Coroner ordered the police to investigate the case. To Amnesty international's knowledge, as of October 2009 no investigation has been carried out.

← **Emmanuel Egbo** was extrajudicially executed by a police officer in Enugu in September 2008. He was only fifteen years old. According to eyewitnesses, he was playing with other children in front of his uncle's house when a police officer stopped to chat to the children. Two other police officers joined him; one of them pulled out his gun and shot the boy, claiming he was an armed robber. Eyewitnesses confirm that Emmanuel Egbo was unarmed. After several visits, the family found out that the Investigating Police Officer (IPO) had moved to a new post. "The police officer told us that the boy was an armed robber and the case had been closed. It was a nightmare to us to learn of this development," his family told Amnesty International. In August 2009, the family discovered that Emmanuel Egbo's body had disappeared from the mortuary; as of November 2009, the body is still missing.

Azuamaka Victor Maduamago (24) was arrested in Onitsha on 20 August 2008. He was handed over to SARS Awkuzu, Anambra State. Azuamaka Victor Maduamago was denied access to a lawyer, medical care and was not allowed to see his family. In October 2008, the family were informed that he had been transferred to Abuja, Force CID. Force CID however, denied he was in their custody. To date, his whereabouts are unknown. The IGP ordered an investigation of his case in September 2009.

Chukwuemeka Matthew Onovo, a student aged 22, left his father's house in Enugu on the morning of 4 July 2008. When he failed to come home that afternoon, his father went to the police to report him missing. The next day, after neighbours told the father that there had been a shootout with the police near his house, he went looking for his son. "I went there and found his glasses on the ground", he told Amnesty International. Chukwuemeka Matthew Onovo had been shot and killed by the police. The police claimed that Chukwuemeka Matthew Onovo was an armed robber, but an eye witness said he was unarmed when he was killed. The autopsy, ordered by the court, confirmed that he had died of a gunshot wound, but the police did not make any further attempt to investigate his death. No one was held responsible. "I don't know who shot my son, till today..." his father said. "It affected me so much. He was my first and only son."

Godgift Ferguson Ekerete (aged 24), **Tony Oruama** (aged 21), **Harry Ataria** (aged 26) and one other man (aged 20) were brought to Mile 1 police station in Port Harcourt on 3 July 2008. All four were dead by the end of the day. According to the police, the four men were "armed robbers and cultists", although their families believe that they were innocent. The father of one of the men told Amnesty International that he had heard gunshots at the police station. The mother of one of the men said: "A boy ran to me and said 'they have killed your son, they killed him.' It was at the back of the police station, I saw four corpses." The police authorities never investigated the deaths and the families have not received an official account of the events that led to the deaths of the four men. Their bodies have been in the mortuary for more than a year.

Daniel Adewuyi Tella, a 27-year-old graduate in Banking and Finance, was arrested on 7 February 2006 on his way home in Festac, Lagos. His family say that the police took the money he had for his youth service and might have tortured him in attempt to get more. He died in police custody. The police later alleged that Daniel Adewuyi Tella sustained injuries all over his body when he jumped out of a moving police vehicle. Local NGOs and the family do not believe this story. When the family went to identify Daniel Adewuyi Tella's body at the police station, all his possessions were gone: "He did not have any shoes, wallet, phone, or money on him. The deceased owned a gold chain which he was wearing on this day and this was also not found on him when I identified him at the police station. All valuables that he had had been stolen." The family wrote several petitions to the Commissioner of Police in Lagos State, the Attorney General and Commissioner of Justice in Lagos State, the Governor of Lagos State and other officials. As far as the family is aware, no inquiry was carried into Daniel Adewuyi Tella's death.

← On 1 August 2005, at 2pm, **Chinedu Ani** and his friend asked a politician for financial support for the friend's football career. According to a witness, the politician became angry and told the two that he "would deal with them seriously". The politician made a complaint at a police station, claiming the two men were "armed robbers". Around an hour later, the two men were shot by police officers and taken to the police station in the boot of their car. They were kept in the boot for hours, driven to state CID and back to Ogui police station, although no arms were found on them or in their car. After 5 pm, a police officer decided the men should go to hospital. When they reached the hospital at 6.15 pm, Chinedu Ani had already died; his friend was badly wounded. Chinedu Ani's family claim that the police prevented the two men for getting medical treatment. "My brother was losing blood fast. I demanded to see an officer to bring them to hospital. The police told me they don't give hospital aid to criminals."

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On 9 September 2005, the Governor of Enugu State set up a Commission of Inquiry into the death of Chinedu Ani. The commission finalized the inquiry in November 2005 and sent its report to the Governor of Enugu State. To date, the report or the government's whitepaper have not been made public, despite repeated requests by Chinedu Ani's family. No steps have been taken to prosecute those responsible for his death. Chinedu Ani's brother said of the one of the police officers involved: "After four years, he is still in the force; who knows how many people he has killed now."

Student **Emeka Ugwoke**, aged 17, and **Izuchukwu Ayogu**, aged 16, were extrajudicially executed by the police in Nsukka in March 2002. Their bodies were mutilated. After an investigation into their deaths, the DPO and several police officers were found guilty. The DPO was dismissed and transferred to Abuja, but escaped. In October 2006, the Federal High Court ordered the NPF to prosecute the police officer and pay N5 million in damages to the two families, yet nothing has been paid so far. Amnesty International research shows that the NPF regularly ignores court verdicts of this kind.