

## Retribution attacks cost father of human rights defender his right eye

For immediate distribution

Contact: Jesse Christopherson August 19, 2010 (480) 882-8370

Two men physically attacked the family of a prominent humanist and human rights defender in Mbaise, Nigeria on August 4 in retribution for his work.

“They shot twice in the air and my mother fainted,” Leo Igwe, founder of the Nigerian Humanist Movement, said. “They later descended on my aging father and started beating him. They blindfolded him with a piece of cloth and hit him several times with stones.

“[My father passed out] and the hoodlums ransacked the whole house and made away with whatever they found valuable. My father bled from the right eye, nose and mouth. He had bruises on his head, hands, legs and chest,” Igwe said.

Igwe said he took his father to a specialty hospital but the eye could not be saved.

Igwe said police did not immediately respond when he reported the attack, and told him that he must send a written request if he wished for an investigation. Igwe said he believes the attack is a result of his advocacy for a child rape survivor. He said the child’s alleged attacker has influence with local courts, soldiers, and police.

Igwe is well known in Nigeria and the international human rights community for promoting the rights of women, children, and LGBTs, and the separation of church and state. He said private parties and the government have harassed and attacked him and his family because of his work. He said he was arrested in January on false charges and his brothers were detained and beaten by police in 2008.

Igwe needs money for security measures to prevent further attacks and to pay his father’s medical bills. You can send tax-deductible contributions (please mention Leo Igwe’s name) to the Institute for Science and Human Values (ISHV), which has donated \$1,000. 5201 West Kennedy Blvd. Tampa, FL 33609.

ISHV requests that letters condemning the attacks and harassment, and asking police to investigate and protect the Igwe family, be sent directly to authorities in Nigeria at the addresses below, or e-mailed to [jchristopherson@ishv.net](mailto:jchristopherson@ishv.net) with the subject heading “Leo Igwe.” The e-mails will be printed and mailed to authorities each week:

1. Mr Ogbonna Onovo

Inspector General of Police

Police Command Headquarters

Area 11, Garki

Abuja, FCT

PMB 24

Nigeria

2. Mr Aloysius Okorie

Commissioner of Police

State Headquarters

Owerri, Imo

Nigeria

3. Prince Ken C.O. Njemanze

Commissioner for Justice

Block 10, New Secretariat Complex

Port Harcourt Road, PMB 1145

Owerri, Imo

Nigeria

Telephone from the United States:

011 234 083-230851

or 011 234 083-230041

4. Chief Ikedi Ohakim

Executive Governor

Government House

Owerri Imo State

The Nigerian Humanist Movement was founded with the continued support of the Institute for Science and Human Values. Any funding it receives through ISHV (separately from donations for the Igwe family) will provide support for its operations, especially attempting to explain the humanist alternative that Nigeria needs so badly. For additional information about ISHV, visit:

<http://www.instituteforscienceandhumanvalues.net/>

<http://www.facebook.com/scienceandvalues>