

Who killed Isaiah Abraham?

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By Zechariah Manyok Biar

December 5, 2012 - On December 4th or 5th, 2012, Isaiah Abraham was dragged out of his house and shot dead in front of the same house by unknown gunmen. It is not yet clear why he was killed. But most of us know that Isaiah Abraham was a well known critic of the Government. In most cases, I was his opposite but we were still great friends. Recently when I told Isaiah that I wanted to get married, he became the first person to voluntarily tell me that he was going to assist me.

Isaiah and I were great friends even though we disagreed because we both knew that in democracy, differences are as important as sameness. We judge ourselves better when we have somebody who disagrees with us. I am the loser now because I will miss the writing of Isaiah.

I knew Isaiah Abraham since 1995. He was working with the United Nations when we were defending Kapoeta from the enemy. Isaiah Diing Abraham Chan Awuol, if one did not know his full name, was not afraid to assist soldiers who were starving in Buno in 1997 even though his mandate was to give the ration to civilians only. I witnessed that. Was that not a risk to his job?

Not only that, Isaiah was one of the first soldiers to rebel against the Government. He was one of SPLA officials. He was loyal to the freedom he fought for. That was why he was committed to criticizing vices in the Government. He had nothing to do with the defending of his community of Kongor or Twic East. For example, he once asked me to apologize to Uror County when I criticized the MPs from there after the repeated killing of innocent people from my home areas.

Isaiah's writing was always balanced even though many people could not easily get what he was saying. He would give credit where it due. He respected my writing and I respected his, even though our views were always opposite. The misunderstanding of his views by our officials was great.

But he also spoke his mind when he believed that doing so was good for South Sudan. The following paragraph is from the article he wrote few days before his death from the hands of unknown gunmen. The article is entitled, "Khartoum though has a case must give peace a chance."

"The argument by South Sudan leaders that the matter of SPLM/A-North is an internal matter doesn't hold water. It is not enough in itself. How about our charge that Dr. Lam Akol of the Democratic Change and Major David Yau Yau are supported by Khartoum, isn't that not an internal affair of our country? Why do we call their differences with their rebels 'internal affair' and never call ours the same? We must choose between peace and war and not both. Peace is what our people want, not war."

Despite Isaiah's criticism of the system, his family is really committed to anything about the SPLM and South Sudan. A day before Isaiah was killed, his mother Rev. Rebecca Lueth Wel was traveling to Rumbek to pray for peace among communities there because of her love for this country. Isaiah's brothers are working in the police and the army at senior positions. One would wonder if his killing would be because of his being critical of the system since everything around his family is for the system.

It is sad that nobody will bring Isaiah back from death even if we now learned that everything he was writing was because of his sincere love for this country. Who wants to endanger his/her life if it is not from the deep-rooted love for the cause?

But we must be careful not to jump into conclusion on why he was killed and who did it. It is not yet clear why Isaiah was killed in cold blood, but it will be known no matter what.

When I visited Isaiah father's house today, I saw the anger I have never seen from our people. This means that damage has been done to our loyalty to the system. Whoever did the killing has succeeded in causing suspicions among our people.

It would be very important for our Government to find the killers to know exactly why they killed Isaiah so that we are convinced that the killing was not politically motivated. Otherwise, the anger I am now seeing will remain in us for a long time.

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