



# National Association of Women Lawyers®

*The voice of women in the law™*

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September 11, 2006

Sunday Ehindero  
Inspector General of Police  
Force Headquarters  
Abuja, Nigeria

Re: Case of Virginia Mgbemena, Agwu, Enugu State

Honorable Inspector General of Police:

I am writing to you on behalf of the National Association of Women's Lawyers, a preeminent association of lawyers in the United States. We have been informed about the case of Mrs. Virginia Mgbemena of Agwu, Enugu State. Our Nigerian colleague, Stella Odife, of the Women's Organization for Gender Issues (WOGI) reported that Mrs. Mgbemena's son was murdered after she successfully asserting her land rights as a widow in court. We understand that the murderers were men hired by a male relative disgruntled with the court's ruling, that they admitted the murder in the presence of the Criminal Investigator and that they were indicted for murder, after thorough investigation by the Criminal Investigation Department of Police.

Astonishingly, once in custody, the twelve men indicted were released by the Director of Public Prosecution, contrary to the report by the Investigating officers. WOGI has submitted a petition to you informing you of this development to which we are informed you have not responded to date. The indicted men have not been rearrested and now constitute an imminent danger to Ms. Mgbemena and her family (both she and her second son were physically injured when the murder took place). Further, we are informed that the lives of members of WOGI who reported this case to you are endangered. These developments are of grave concern to us.

We respectfully request that you call on the Director of Public Prosecution who freed these men. Please inquire how he will protect the lives of Mrs. Mgbemena's and her son, how he will protect WOGI members from violent repercussions and how he came to the decision to release these dangerous men. We trust that you and you colleagues will take all action necessary to bring these men to justice. We, as women lawyers, are most concerned that women, like Mrs. Mgbemena and members of WOGI will be free to assert their legal rights,

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without having to experience and/or fear retaliation.

We will be watching this case closely and would be much obliged if you would keep us informed. We appreciate your attention to this case and offer our help and support to help keep women safe.

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Eva Herzer'.

Eva Herzer  
Co-Chair International Law Committee

cc. Honorable Governor Dr. Chimaroke Nnamani  
WOGI