

# Dear Chris Msando: Letters from His Wife and Children

Dear Osiepa,

It feels like yesterday, but it is 2 years to the rest of the world.

I really don't know what to write or where to start on what has happened since you have been gone, my dear husband, friend, confidant and father to our beautiful children.

I have so much to write to you and tell you. I still keep you updated and I know you are watching so close and keen. I feel your presence daily in all that the children and I do.

As I pen my letter to you, I have my earphones on, the volume is high playing your favorite gospel song, Jemimah Thiongo's "*mipango ya Mungu niya ajabu*". I totally relate to that song, my darling.

I miss you so much. Not a single day passes without me thinking of you and wondering how life would be, if you were still with us.

Since you have been gone, my love, a lot has changed.

There is a tag that comes with the term widow. People who were so close to you—from family to friends—just disappear. My love, when they see me or our children, they appear shocked, wondering how the children have grown. There is so much I could tell you of what has happened with my new title "widow" but that is for another day.

Since you have been gone, the children have grown and they miss you. They always carry your wise counsel every day and look so much like you, they even sometimes act like you. I smile knowing you are watching over them.

Since you have been gone, you got recognized in Ghana for contributing selflessly, being a hero and standing up for electoral integrity. Our son Allan Hawii gave a beautiful speech and received the award on your behalf. He is growing to be a handsome and intelligent young man. When they killed you, the children kept asking each dignitary that visited us why they killed you. As you will read from Allan, Alvin, Alama and Allison, you will see how much they miss you but also how strong they have become.

Since you have been gone, the organization you worked for has been in so much confusion. Your Chairman checks on the children and myself from time to time, but has no answer to why you were killed. The country has seen no peace, since they killed you.

Since you have been gone, I cannot stop asking myself why you had to be killed. Why didn't they choose another way to sort out the issues? Could they not have sought peace earlier and spared your life and those of others? Could they not have shaken hands before the election, made peace and spared your life and those of others?

Since you have been gone, it has been very challenging bringing up the children and playing the part of Mummy and Daddy. On most days, I cry myself to sleep. I cry when we have birthdays and you cannot be there to help our babies to blow out their candles. I cry when it is Christmas or any function that involved us. I have to plan and make decisions by myself. I cry so much knowing you are gone and will not come back. One thing I know for sure is that my tears will not roll down my cheeks in vain. Those behind your brutal torture and murder shall not find peace.

To the people who planned and executed my husband's torture and murder, I still ask did you gain the world? Does it make you happy?

If you hurt other people in order to gain power, you are an extremely weak individual. My tears will not roll down my eyes in vain. God will wipe them. I know for sure that vengeance is for the Lord. There is nothing as hurtful as being expected to accept the murder of my husband and move on. Nothing annoys me more than when someone expects me to accept something that they wouldn't wish to be done to them.

Chris my love, today I choose to celebrate you for the years that we had together and the beautiful memories that you left for our children and myself. When your favourite Rhumba song "Fatimata" by Sam Mangwana plays I smile and see you singing along.

I may be slightly broken, a little bruised and even permanently scarred. But I still wake up every day with a tremendous will to fight for our children and the ups and downs of life. I am a strong woman and mother who refuses to be defeated.

Death changes nothing. I still miss the sound of your voice, the wisdom of your advice, the stories you shared with us. Time changes nothing. I miss you just as much today as I did the day you were murdered.

I could go on and on. The gap you left is vast, I am standing on the Promises of God. Exodus 14:14, "The Lord will fight for you, you need only to be still"

In the sweet by and by, we shall meet on that beautiful shore. I am missing you today. I know you are in heaven but I miss you so much.

Love today and forever,

Your wife Eva

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Dear Daddy,

It has been a short while since you have been gone.

I miss you so much. A lot has happened when you have been away.

I wish I could get a bench and sit down with you to tell you in person. But sadly the horrible people took you away from us.

God will punish them and one day we shall meet in heaven.

One thing I know is that you are watching down on me daily. I remember your smile and your love for cars.

Mummy managed to get the car back from the police and she fixed it. She is doing a good job at maintaining the car. She is doing a terrific job taking care of us.

She cries a lot sometimes and that makes me sad, but she is becoming very strong and God is with us.

I finally moved to the next stage of becoming a young man, I went through the initiation ceremony. Mummy took care of us as you were not there. I wish you were there to teach me how to be a young man.

Every Father's day I celebrate you. We celebrate mummy twice, as she is really trying to fit into your shoes.

I went to Ghana together with mummy to pick an award on your behalf. There were very many people there. They said so many nice things about you. I am very proud to be called my father's son.

I love computers and technology just like you.

I promise to make you extra proud, to take care of all of us and mummy.

Daddy, I know you are up in heaven and God is taking care of you.

I am using the pain of your killing as fuel. Fuel that will drive me straight to a better future.

Love always,

My father's son,

**Allan Hawii Msando**

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Dear Daddy,

I wonder how it is up there in heaven.

I miss you so much and the many rides you would take me for.

I miss you on my birthdays.

The toys you would buy me.

I am being a good boy and taking care of mummy and my sisters.

I have grown big and doing well in school.

I have interest in music. It is sad that you will not be here to buy me the musical instruments and DJ -machine you promised.

The people who did whatever they did to you, will pay one day. I pray that God punishes them.

I know one day we shall meet in heaven and I promise to be a good boy and make you and mummy proud.

I love you always,

Your son

## **Alvin Mich Amani Msando**

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Dear Daddy.

How are you up there?

I miss you carrying me from the car to the house on your shoulders.

God will punish the people who took you away from us.

I have grown big and beautiful mummy says.

I am dancing more and may become a ballerina as you said.

I will make you very proud and mummy will be fine. I am taking care of her.

I miss you so much but I know God will wipe away my tears.

I love you forever.

Your daughter

## **Alama Neema Msando**

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Daddy dearest,

How are you? How is it up there in heaven? How does God look like? When are you coming back?

When you left, mummy and you were still carrying me around. I was a baby. Guess what? I am now in school and I can write and read as well as sing.

I sing a lot for mummy, especially when she is sad. But she

keeps saying that you are in heaven. I always ask her to tell you to come back. She hugs me and says you are not coming, so I keep your picture next to my bed to watch over me.

Mummy says that you are an angel like the ones I see in my storybooks. I still have my 1<sup>st</sup> birthday doll and the Christmas gift you bought me. I will keep and treasure them.

I will carry your love in my heart.

Daddy's little girl forever,

**Alison Zawadi Mariah Msando**