

Osun imam nabbed as worshippers beat man to death

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By Bola Bamigbola

The Osun State Police Command on Friday said it had arrested four people, including an imam, over the death of a worshipper, Najeem Hammed.

Sources said Hammed, who allegedly attempted to attack the imam of Ummu Hanni Adigun Memorial Central Mosque in the Ogo-Oluwa area during morning prayers, was mobbed by the congregation.

A resident, who was close to the scene but craved anonymity for security reasons, said Hammed attempted to hit the imam with a microphone stand but missed the target.

He further said Hammed was immediately seized by other worshippers and dragged outside the mosque, where he was beaten.

The source said the matter was later reported at the Ataoja Police Division.

A member of the congregation, who spoke with Saturday PUNCH on condition of anonymity to avoid arrest during a visit to the mosque on Friday, said Hammed was displeased with the imam's sermon, which he felt was targeted at him, and attempted to hit the cleric with a microphone stand.

“The imam was still delivering his sermon when Hammed got up and approached him. He attempted to hit the imam, but he missed the target. The frightened imam ran, and some of the people who came to worship seized Hammed and dragged him outside the mosque. They beat him up.

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“They later reported the incident at a nearby police station. Operatives came around and evacuated him. He was injured and sustained open injuries,” he said.

It was also learnt that Hammed’s health condition deteriorated while in custody, and he was rushed to a hospital, where he was eventually confirmed dead.

Displeased by the action of the congregation, family members and friends of the deceased, it was learnt, later stormed the mosque during the Jumaat service and threatened to attack worshippers.

Confirming the incident, the spokesperson for the Osun State Police Command, Abiodun Ojelabi, said four people had been arrested in connection with the incident.

Ojelabi, who said a probe had commenced, added that Hammed was attacked outside the mosque.

“The incident happened this morning shortly after 6am. Four suspects have been arrested. The DPO and other tactical teams have been deployed to maintain law and order. The corpse has been deposited at the Osun State Teaching Hospital,” Ojelabi said.

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