

# Who killed Chidiebere Ofomata?

## Colleagues finger LASTMA official

By JOY OLEKANMA

**L**ADIPO Main Market Traders Association (LMMTA) has called on the Lagos state government to look into the matter surrounding the death of their member, Late Mr. Chidiebere Ofomata who was alleged killed by an official of Lagos State Traffic Management Authority (LASTMA) penultimate week.

Speaking during a news conference held Thursday in Lagos, Chairman of the association, Mr. Kenneth Aniekwe said the Lagos state governor, Mr. Babatunde Raji Fashola and the Special Adviser to the governor on LASTMA matters, Mr. Kayode Opeifa should look into the matter and adequately bring the culprit to book.

According to him, late Mr. Ofomata was a member of the association for 13 years and never had any bad reputation before the incident that caused his death.

Narrating the incident to *Sunday Champion*, an eye witness who was also riding with the deceased on his motorbike before the incident, Mr. Okoro Humphery said

"We were riding to the market for the day's business penultimate Friday, February 26, 2010 when we met a LASTMA official by name Mr. Ganiyu Raimi before Okeafa bridge at Isolo. He was standing in the middle of the road and the deceased called on him to leave the spot for safety reasons without knowing he had offended the officer."

According to Okoro, the Officer asked the deceased to stop, parked him by the side of the road and demanded to know who he was that he would talk to him.

When the boy refused talking to him, he began to beat the deceased with a belt tied on the deceased motorbike.

Mr. Okoro said "When he was flogging the deceased, another officer by name Lawal came and pleaded with him to let us go but out of his pride, he insisted that the deceased should identify where he belonged. Immediately late Chidiebere talked back at him, the officer hit him three times on the chest and he slumped and died on the spot."

According to Okoro, immediately the matter was reported to Ejigbo police station, the officer ran away with his team and called another officer who was not with them as at the time of the incident to get to the scene and control the traffic.

It was this very officer that gave the identity of the accused when he was arrested by the police.

He said the police went to the LASTMA

office at Ejigbo and got the accused arrested but transferred him to Area 'D' police station, Mushin to avert attack by the public and according to the police has been transferred to the Homicide Division, Panty.

The corpse was immediately deposited by the police at the Isolo General Hospital for autopsy after the doctors confirmed him dead.

incident but rather told the family to wait for the result of the autopsy.

On if the deceased had any illness before his death, Chief Ozumba said there was no history of illness in the course of his lifetime.

He said late Mr. Ofomata hailed from Ihuolum, Enugu village in Aguluezechukwu, Aguata Local government of Anambra state. He was 32 and left an aged mother, a pregnant wife and a child of two years.

Ozumba said "We seek for justice. The culprit must be brought to book and since LASTMA is an arm of the state government, the government should take care of his aged mother and his immediate family."

Speaking to *Sunday Champion*, the deceased's wife, Mrs. Joy Ginika said the news of her husband death got to her at 9pm on the very day her husband died.

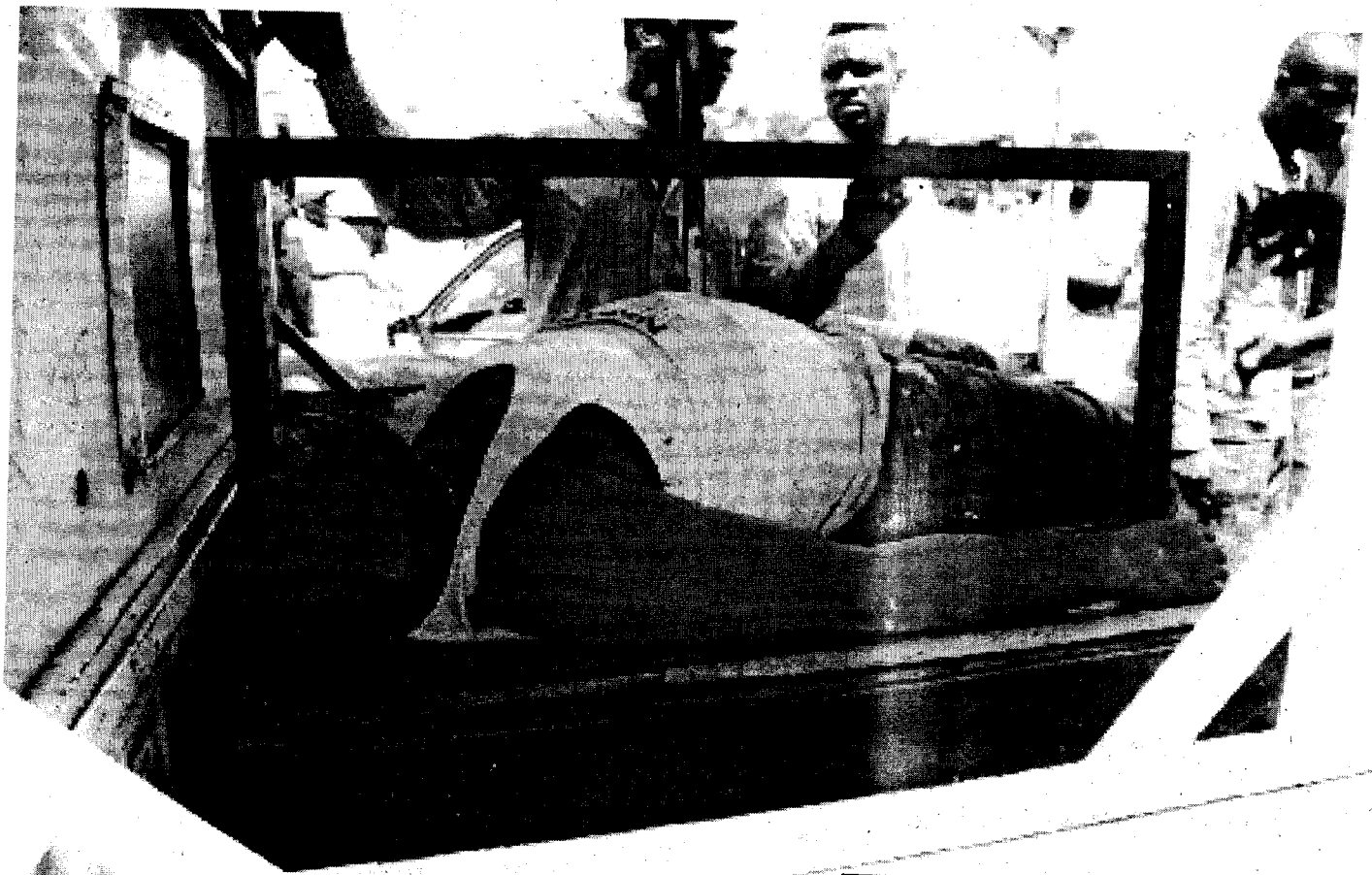
She said her husband had no trace of illness that influenced his

until the incident death.

She said "I wish I could wake from this dream. My husband never had any disease of any kind until that day when his life was cut short by his fellow man."

Family spokes person, Chief Sunny Ozumba lamented on the attitude of the LASTMA Chief Executive officer, Mr. Young Orabeme to the family.

According to him, the LASTMA boss treated them with disdain and never showed any remorse as regard to the



Late Chidiebere in LASTMA operational vehicle after he was killed



Chidiebere with his wife and son

I was not told until about 9pm that very day, maybe because of my condition. I went with my son to see my pastor and his wife when I noticed they were receiving strange calls. They left, told me to wait that they would drive me home."

"Since I was restless and my son had the feeling and was crying all day, I decided to go home without waiting for them to come back. It was when I got home I met faces I had not seen for long who came in and gave me another version of my life."

I became confused and shattered when I saw that it was the man my husband rode with in the morning that brought back his motorbike."

The pregnant woman said the LASTMA authority has not visited the deceased residence since the incident and called on the Lagos state government to intervene in her situation.

Effort to reach the LASTMA Chief Executive officer, Mr. Young Orabame and his special adviser, Mr. Sola Giwa proved abortive but when *Sunday Champion* met the IPO in-charge of the case, Mr. Emma Nwokporo at the Homicide Department of the State Criminal Investigation Department, Panty, Yaba, Lagos, he confirmed that the matter is under investigation in his office and that the accused person is still in police custody.

When this reporter visited the accused in the cell and demanded to chat with him, this was what transpired between this reporter and the accused:

**Are you Mr. Ganiyu Raimi?**

Yes.

**How are you?**

Fine

**What brought you here?**

Get out.

Whatever the case is, the general public demands a fair judgment to the parties involved and clamours that the Lagos state government intervenes in the matter.