

Policeman kills pregnant woman, man over N50

A pregnant woman, Mrs Saratu Dalami, and a yet-to-be identified man were Saturday morning shot dead at a checkpoint at Abaji in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), when a policeman opened fire on a vehicle whose driver gave N20 instead of N50 he requested.

The driver, John Dada, also sustained bullet wounds on his right hand and currently lying critically ill at a clinic at Abaji.

After the incident, *City News* learnt that the policemen at the checkpoint dismantled the roadblocks and took to their heels. Their action angered the natives of the community who in turn blocked the Abaji-Toto highway. They also chanted war songs.

The protesters were however pacified when their traditional chief and an assistant commissioner of police in charge of operations at Gwagwalada met with them and assured them that the affected policemen would be investigated and made to face the law.

A passenger in the ill-fated car told *City News* that when the driver approached the checkpoint at the border



Driver of the ill-fated vehicle John Dada (left) lying on a hospital bed, while on the right is late Mrs Saratu Dalami.

By Abubakar Yakubu & Sadiq Abubakar Isah

between Toto in Nasarawa state and Abaji, he offered N20 to a policeman who collected it and waved him to go.

"As the driver was about to accelerate, another policeman asked him to stop and increase the money to N50," he said.

The passenger said an argument ensued between the policeman that collected N20 and the one that demanded

N50.

"The one who collected N20 was telling the other policeman to let us go and when he refused, the policeman then beckoned on the driver and asked him to drive off with his passengers. As the driver was about pulling off, bullets were fired at the vehicle by the policeman that demanded N50, which killed a pregnant woman from the town who was going to Toto for a medical checkup and a

stranger who bordered the car from Abaji," he said.

The vice-chairman of the drivers' union at Toto road, Abaji, Abdul Hamid Musa, corroborated the passenger's statement. He said he went to the same checkpoint ten minutes before the incident occurred to settle a problem between another driver and the police.

"A report got to me on Saturday morning that the police at Toto road check-

Pic: Abubakar Yakubu.

point had impounded one of the vehicles of our members and I rushed there and found out that the car was impounded because the driver refused to settle the policemen at the checkpoint," he said.

Musa said when he approached the senior officer in the team, he (Musa) was snubbed and informed to see the junior ranked policemen who said they were taking the driver to their station.

"By the time the police decided to listen to me, all the passengers had disembarked from the vehicle and they asked for N200 which was later reduced to N100," he said.

The vice-chairman said immediately the police collected the N100 from them, one of his members forecast that the money collected from drivers might bring trouble if the police did not stop the habit.

"Less than ten minutes after we returned from the checkpoint, we learnt that the police fired at a Mazda 323 car with a registration number XA 169 PAK, killing a pregnant woman and a man who sat on the front seat of the car because of N50," he lamented.

A commercial driver called policemen at Abaji greedy. "The policemen from Rubochi who used to man the checkpoint understood with drivers, and we had no problem until Abaji policemen drove them away," he said.

The driver said when Abaji policemen took over,

they started imposing various sums of money from drivers on the road.

"A red Golf car with a registration number SH 775 ABJ was fined heavily by the policemen at the checkpoint and some of the drivers went to the place to appeal to them to have mercy because of the economical situation in the country," he said.

The driver said despite their appeal, the policemen at the checkpoint still collected lump sum of money from drivers.

When *City News* visited the town at 3pm Saturday, the pregnant woman had been buried according to Muslim rites while the body of the other person had been deposited at Gwagwalada Specialist Hospital morgue by the police. Friends and family members of the late Saratu were seen sympathizing with her husband who sat in the midst of Muslim clerics.

The driver of the vehicle was also seen in a critical state at a clinic at Abaji.

The police area commander, Gwagwalada, told *City News* reporter that before he got to Abaji, all the suspects had been taken to Garki FCT police command.

"The information I have about the incident is the same thing you have because I did not have the opportunity to interrogate the suspects before they were taken to Garki," he said.

At the Abaji police station, the reporter overheard policemen say the policeman who fired the shots was not supposed to hold arms as he had not being properly trained in its usage.

The area commander, along with another assistant commissioner of police and other police superintendents from nearby police divisions were seen briefing policemen of Abaji police station.

The Ona of Abaji, Alhaji Adamu Baba Yunusa, also declined to comment on the incident.

"I was not in town when the incident happened and only heard about the incident from my subjects," he said. He added further he would have to get more information from the deceased parents before he can be abreast of the situation.

AEPB officials demolish illegal structures on roadside

Traders who sell along the sides of major high ways along airport - Gwagwalada road were on Saturday raided by officials of the Abuja Environmental and Protection Board (AEPB), who burnt their stalls.

Those who were lucky saved their goods from being carted away while the unlucky ones had their goods confiscated and arrested.

City News reporter observed some of the stalls burning while traders had to enter into small bushes to retrieve their goods that were hidden from the AEPB officials.

Isah, an onions seller, lamented that he lost his goods in the raid. "I sighted them raiding my co-traders' stalls and decided to run away to avoid arrest," he said.

He said the AEPB officials descended on his stall and burnt everything inside.

Mama Sheri described the action of the AEPB officials as unfair. "We were not given any

prior warning and this is a trade that I have been doing for some years to feed my family," she said.

She appealed to the AEPB authorities to allow traders to continue with their sales in

the area due to the high patronage.

Travellers who normally park by Giri junction to buy yams, tomatoes and bread were nowhere to be seen as the whole area was deserted

Kalo motors disowns jailed protesters

By Atika Balal

None of the staff of Kalo motors company engaged in a protest in Abuja over the election results announced by the Independent National Election Commission recently, the management of the company said.

The chairman, Alhaji Yunusa Suleiman Kalo, said the three persons sentenced to six weeks in prison by an Abuja magistrates' court for protesting on May 3 were not members of staff of the motor company.

"The protesters who were jailed for protesting in the Federal Capital Territory are not on the payroll of Kalo motors

and cannot claim to be staff," he said.

Alhaji Kalo, who is a PDP card-carrying member, said in the statement that he had contributed immensely to the development of the ruling party in Nigeria and therefore wondered why his company's name would be used to make such a mischief.

Alhaji Kalo, who is an ambassador of peace of the Inter-religious and International Federation for World Peace, said, "we are an indigenous company highly involved in importation, distribution and

due to the raid.

Officials of the Federal Capital Territory administration had recently vowed that all illegal structures in the FCT would be removed before May 29.

sales of motor vehicles and not a registered political party."

He said his firm did not indulge in such acts and congratulated the president-elect and his vice as well as all PDP governors-elect on the victory at the polls.

It would be recalled that three persons, Yunusa Ibrahim, Abubakar Mohammed and Bashir Shehu who paraded the streets of Abuja on May 1 with placards which read 'Sai Buhari; say no to anti democracy', all claimed to work for Kalo motors and were sentenced to six weeks' imprisonment by an Abuja magistrates' court.