

# How police killed 22-year-old Maryam

*October 6, will forever be a sorrowful day for Shamsudeen Ali Soba as he witnessed the death of Maryam Arma Ya'u, a 22 year old student of the School of Health Technology, Makarfi, Kaduna state who until her death, was attached to the Kofan Ganya General Hospital where she was undergoing her industrial attachment.*

From Maryam Ahmadu-Suka, Kaduna

Narrating the incident, Shamsudeen Ali Soba, who was a friend to Maryam, said on Thursday October 6, 2011, Maryam called me and said she was in the market but told me that when she comes back, she will call me. When she came back, she called me to tell me that she was back. After prayers, she called me and asked me if I could come and pick her so that we can go to her sister's house and I told her I was coming. After I left home leaving my friends and a cousin of mine whom I told to wait for me, he responded that he will wait for me. I proceeded to her place on Fulani road in Unguwar Rimi, Kaduna. When I got there, we exchanged greetings and she told me there was an old woman who was not feeling fine and she wanted to go and see. So she entered the backseat of the car. After that she told me the persons house was on Kinshasha road. So I followed the route that would take us to our destination.

"On our way to the place, she asked me the name of a road we passed and I told her it was Dan Doki and she said she has never followed the road before and asked if we could follow the road. So I turned and followed the road. After we crossed a bridge on the road after a sharp bend, I noticed a vehicle that was unmarked because it had no plate number and no writing on it to indicate it was a police truck only that it was the kind of trucks police use. So I moved



Late Maryam Arma Ya'u

forward and parked the car and my body started shaking, after 15-20 minutes I saw a police man rushing toward me as if someone sent them to me and I became scared that is when Maryam moved from the back to the front seat as I started the car and started moving, in the process I even brushed the police vehicle and then I entered the bush after.

"As I entered the bush I was moving slowly to know where to go when I sighted the police coming toward me on foot, we where together with her and all she could do was pray. On sighting them (the police) I came back to the main road and made a u-turn. One was holding a club and the other a police gun with some people in the vehicle. I tried to approach them to tell them that we were just passing the area. But on getting there, I realized they were trying to hit us but by the Grace of God we succeeded in leaving the place, unfortunately a few seconds after I heard a gunshot and glass shattering but I refused to stop because I was scared. Then I entered through Isah Kaita road, then Yahaya road and then Inuwa Wada road and finally stopped on Alamara road all in Unguwar Rimi.

"When I stopped on Alamara road, I called a friend of mine Abubakar (not real name) and told him I was in trouble and he asked me what happened he even thought I was joking so. He put off the phone, I called him again and told him I was not joking and that he should come and help me that Maryam has been shot. After a while, they arrived and looked to see how she was, so I removed the key to the car and they told me

to wait let them go and get help. He did not even tell me he was going to get a doctor so I waited for them. While I was waiting, I called my mother to beg for her forgiveness. She asked me what had happened and I just repeated that she should forgive me and that was the last thing I remembered.

"I woke up two days after in the hospital; I was told that I was first taken to Saint Gerald's hospital before I was brought to Garkuwa hospital. Since the day the incident happened, our parents have gone to make a report to the police and when I regained consciousness in the hospital they (police) conducted an interview, and I told them exactly what am telling you now and I was discharged from the hospital after two days. We went to the Kaduna police head quarters and the case has been transferred to the anti-robbery and I have also narrated what happened to them," he said.

Also speaking on the incident, the Secretary General of the Civil Rights Congress (CRC) Nasir Abbas, who linked Shamsudeen with our correspondent, disclosed further that the Congress will do everything possible to ensure that the police officer involved does not go scot free.

"Although the news came late to us but even as at that, we are not going to relax on such circumstances. Basically what we intend doing is to pursue the case to ensure that justice is done with regards to the deceased and also to address such kinds of anomaly looking into the circumstances behind the demise of the lady. The person in question (Maryam) asked a friend to come and pick her up



Late Maryam's friend who was the last to see her alive

to Badarawa. So when they were going from the narratives of the driver, the police stopped them, onseeing that the vehicle is a truck and did not have a number, he tried to maneuver his way out and in the process, brushed the vehicle and what they did was to also follow him and fire gunshots which led to the death of Maryam.

He decried that the police who are supposed to protect the lives and property of citizens are trying to suppress the case. They even tried to and as I speak to you now, the police have not confirmed that such a thing happened.

Recently in Kaduna, the Assistant Inspector General of Police (AIG) Zone 7, Atiku Kafur, while addressing men and officers of the command, said 'there has been a lot of complaints about the negative activities of the police within communities in Kaduna, hence I am urging you to bring the community closer to the police so that they can aid in curtailing criminal activities in the state.

He identified that due to the lukewarm attitude and corruption in the police force there is no way members of the public can assist the police without the police having a good rapport that would restore public confidence of innocent Nigerians otherwise it will be very difficult to get information since the police do not have the intelligence to do so.

Atiku observed that the attitude of the rank and file has dented the image of the Nigeria police and are part of the factors responsible for the current insecurity threats especially the Boko Haram insurgency in the country, adding that those found

to be extorting or collecting bribe and committing other vices would be sanctioned.

"Those officers caught collecting bribe or involved in any activity that could tarnish the good image of the Nigeria police would be de-ranked or dismissed from the police. We are going to weed them out. Officers who came in with fake certificates and in any event, that some are still remaining in the force we are going to dismiss them and charge them to court," he stressed.

The Kaduna State Commissioner of Police, Ballah Magaji Nassarawa, noted that states sharing border with Kaduna have security challenges with potentials for spill-over affects on the Kaduna State police command. "The present strength of the police in Kaduna States needs thrice the number to face the re-occurring security challenges in the state, "the present strength of the Kaduna State command is 13, 588 personnel comprising 665 Senior Police Officer (SPOs), 1,168 Inspectors, 1,895 Sergeants, 6,657 Corporals and 3,203 constables are not enough to cover a population of over 6 million in an area of 45, 567 square kilometers," he said.

The Public Relations Officer, Kaduna Police Command, DSP Aminu Lawal, while confirming the incident said, "there was an allegation like that, but we are yet to know who the police men are, because the case has not been established and there is no record of the incident because we have not see, any weapon that could be linked with the case. Hence, the case has been transferred to head quarters and is under investigation," he added.