

Ethan, during the army chief's visit to the Shehu's Palace in Maiduguri, yesterday.

Police arrest father of dead student

From Ismail Mudashir & Ibrahim Musa Giginyu, Kano

The controversy trailing the death of Hassan Alfa, a 24-year-old student of the Kano State Polytechnic, who allegedly died after his release from police detention, has taken a new dimension with the arrest of his father, Mallam Abdullahi Alfa, by the police yesterday.

Our correspondents gathered that Hassan died on the 26th of last month, days after he was released from police custody. Late Hassan's family are alleging that their son died at the Almu Memorial Hospital following an internal injury he sustained on his head as a result of police torture.

Father of the deceased, Alhaji Alfa Abdullahi Dangi, had in an interview with newsmen weeks ago said his son died after spending seven days in police custody. He said the deceased and his younger brother were arrested following

a misunderstanding with their cousin a day after Sallah.

The 62-year-old resident of Sheka Tudun Maliki quarters of Kumbotso Local Government Area of Kano State said the police released his son when they discovered that he had sustained a "life-threatening injury".

"A day after Sallah, a cousin of my late son, Sa'a Garba Fagge, who was on a visit to the family asked for a permission from me to stage Mandiri, an Islamic songs session, in order to mark the Sallah celebration, which I granted. The event did not start until late in the evening and some of the residents of the area complained to me that it was time for Isha'i prayer and the event should be stopped. I went to them and asked them in a polite way to round off so that people could say their prayers, but they told me that I was not the person that invited them and that I had no right to call off the event. I then called Sa'a and asked her to send them away. But she became

rude, telling me that there was no need for me to ask them to stop since they were praising the prophet. My children became provoked and an argument erupted. I calmed them down and retired for the night. After I went in, they continued with the praise singing, but in no time, a fight broke out between my children and the group," he said.

According to him, the following day, a vigilante vehicle from Fagge Local Government Area with two vigilante men and two police officers came to arrest Hassan, which he resisted. He said after the vigilante group left, a police team from Sheka Division came and forced their way into his residence.

He said they succeeded in arresting two of his children including the deceased. A day after the arrest, his children were labelled armed robbery suspects. He said the police then transferred his children to the Special Anti Robbery Squad (SARS) where he alleged that

they were thoroughly tortured.

"We went there and I saw my son in a terrible state. I later learnt that they took him to hospital and that he was given some drugs. After his release, we took him to a private clinic since most of the hospitals were on strike. We later took him for a scan at the Aminu Kano Teaching Hospital (AKTH) where it was revealed that he had a crack on his skull. Reacting to the allegation, Kano State Acting Police Public Relations Officer, ASP Abubakar Mustapha, confirmed the arrest of the student and his brother.

"The deceased was not tortured as it was on record that the very day he was brought to SARS he was exhibiting signs of illness. He was taken to the Murtala Muhammad Specialist Hospital where he was diagnosed with epilepsy. Based on health grounds and with the discovery of the fact that the complainant and the accused were relatives, the SARS department granted them bail," he said.