

THE WORLD NEWS II

Okada rider killed as Bwari council enforces policy on motorcyclists

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An okada rider operating in Kubwa, Bwari Area Council, was allegedly killed Tuesday in an encounter with some security operatives, said to be engaged by Bwari Area Council to enforce a new policy it introduced on commercial motorcyclists.

Witnesses, who spoke to City News, said that Ibrahim Yunusa, who was forced to swim inside a gutter around Kubwa main market, was allegedly hit several times thereafter with pieces of wood and gun butts for not wearing the reflective jacket introduced by the council two weeks ago.

The witness said the cyclist died as some of his colleagues were trying to take him to Kubwa General Hospital from Byazhi area, where he was initially taken to.

The witness said the operatives stationed themselves around the Kubwa main market, stopping and demanding commercial motorcyclists operating without reflective jacket to purchase one on the spot.

City News learnt that the reflective jacket is being sold at N3,000 each by revenue officials of the council, while many motorcyclists, who could not afford the amount were said to have been taken to the council's secretariat at Bwari and were released only after they paid N5,000 fine.

A commercial motorcyclist, who gave his name as Abubakar Safiyanu, sustained a fracture and injuries on one of his hands, alleging that the security operatives, who forced him to stop, hit him with a wooden baton and to swim in the gutter around the market.

He said the dead person was hit several times with wood and gun butts, after he was forced to swim inside the gutter and drink from it, despite his appeals that he was fasting.

Another witness, who gave his name as Zakari Salihu, complained about the deadline given by the council for buying the jacket and urged it to reduce the cost of the jackets.

He explained that a similar jacket was introduced to them by a construction company for those of them that carried passengers into its camp and it only charged N1,200 each including identification card, wondering why the council's own could be so cost.

City News gathered that the security operatives returned to Kubwa on Wednesday along with the council revenue officials and operated around the second gate, for some time before they left abruptly.

The remains of the dead okada rider were taken to his village in Bakori Local Government Area of Katsina State on Wednesday, where he was said to have come from, according to a source.

When contacted, the Kubwa Police Area Commander, Assistant Superintendent Tony Olofu, confirmed the incident but stated that there was no report of death to the police.

"We are aware that soldiers chased them and they abandoned their motorcycles but we didn't hear any reported death," he said.

Meanwhile, the cyclists staged a peaceful protest at the market on Wednesday to express their grievances over the untimely death of their colleagues.

When City News visited the market yesterday, the council officials responsible for the collection of the levies were not there as the protests may have forced them to withdraw.

Efforts to get the reactions of the council's chairman, Peter Yohana Ushafa, over the incident yesterday failed as his mobile phone was switched off when a call was put across to him.

His Press Secretary, Daodu Dasha, promised to get back to City News after necessary clarification but failed to do so up till the time of filing the report late yesterday.