

## REMEMBERING AN EXEMPLARY RELATIVE



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"Jamila was a devout Muslim, always willing to help the less privileged, kind to all and willing to share whatever she materially possessed during her lifetime."- Husband Dr. M. A. Makarfi

Sunday, June 29, 2014, which coincided with 2nd Ramadan 1435 AH, marked the beginning of the tragedy that occurred due to a car accident along the Kano-Zaria highway. The accident involved my late dear cousin Jamila Sani Borodo, her amiable husband Dr. Muhammad Ahmad Makarfi and two of their children - Fatima and Muhammad. They were initially rushed to the Makarfi General Hospital but were subsequently transferred to the Ahmadu Bello University Teaching Hospital (ABUTH) at Shika-Zaria. The late Jamila sustained the most serious injuries among the victims and had remained in coma since the event with two fractures on her right leg. Her husband had also sustained ghastly injuries, as a result of the impact the red Mercedes Benz C class had after somersaulting several times after a tyre burst. Medical student Fatima, had an injury in the jaw, while Muhammad the Computer Science student of BUK, who happened to be the driver of the car, had light cuts in his leg only. Despite initial signs of improvement, death took away this great family member of ours on July 12 at the ABUTH intensive care unit, which was equivalent to Ramadan 14, after 13 gruesome days in coma.

Auntie or mummy, as the Jamila was popularly called, was the eldest daughter of the late Alhaji Sani Borodo, who coincidentally died as a result of a fatal car crash on the Bukuru-Jos road on September 1, 1986. Jamila was a classic model of a family woman, untiring in her endless pursuit of making the family better than it was - from her immediate home, the extended family, that of friends, neighbours and other people she became close to in her life time. She always tried to make people do right the things. I vividly remember when she scolded me for not attending the annual family meetings that take place during the Sallah celebration. It really hurt that she was missing at the one that took place during this year's event. As her mother Hajia Aisha (Yaya) said to me, Jamila would be joking with her other sisters that if she passed away, the responsibilities of her young children would be assumed by them and one of the sisters would reply that she would prefer to die instead of her, since mummy (Jamila) was so much useful to many other people than she.

Jamila was also another tale of a woman who had friendship with people that had spanned over a long period of time. She was a 'goal getter' type of person who ensured things were done especially as it related to family and even her numerous friends. Yaya said one of Jamila's friends, who was not in the country at the time of her death, came to commiserate with the family ignoring warnings not to come due to an explosive device that was found at the Sabon Titi vicinity of their compound, but the friend said she must come to render her condolences even if she would be a victim of an explosion on the way.

Jamila in her tireless efforts was the one who always reminded us in the family of the need to register for the National Identity Card carried out by the National Identity Management Centre (NIMC). The Kano office of NIMC is at the Federal College of Education junction which is steps away from her home. This made it possible for her to be able to book appointment for the family members early in the morning by sending someone from her house to do so for us due to the large number of people who turned up daily for registration. This made it easy for some of the family members to register for the national ID card. She was a great and humble patriot that we lost to the cold hands of death.

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I happen to be the person who initiated the nickname of aunty Jamila for her which subsequently became the name family members called her. I recall with nostalgia my frequent visits to the various houses she stayed in with her husband at Gandun Albasa, Lamido Crescent, Lafiya Road in Nasarawa G.R.A and finally Sabon Titi, all in Kano. I remember her telling me when I was a child how I would pick her numerous decorative ceramics in her room and break them. It was after the passage of time that I realised that she was indeed a classic cousin but with the passion, care and commitment of an aunt she was. The local 'fura' delicacy that she packaged and dried for my use during my Master's degree sojourn abroad as well as the motivational talk she gave me in regard to my computer shop were cherished acts that I would not forget.

Ahmad said this of his late wife: "Many of her partners and neighbours expressed their fears and anguish for her departure. They wonder how next to handle any public functions involving marriages, traditional/cultural events where she always provide guidance and support. She was a disciplinarian who did what she taught her children as testified by her teaching colleagues."

Safiya, Jamila's eldest daughter, said this of her late mother: "She was a kind of person that was active and creative. She never waited to be supported by anybody rather she always believed in helping others and forging good human relationships. Mummy was one in a million and irreplaceable."

Rahila, Jamila's sister, had this to say of the deceased, who was more like a second mother to her: "Death is inevitable, I recently realised that I was among those who did not take this fact as real until after the demise of aunty. I have never imagined life without you until now that you're no more. I remember the priority you used to give me over your own children, up to the time you married me off and I am sure that you have fulfilled your life dreams. Even with our other sisters, we were the closest because you brought me up. You were a bulldozer who successfully managed your liabilities and those of others. We heavily depended on you because you had a heart of stone. It still feels like a dream to me that you are gone but I know Allah loves you more. May the good characters, praises and legacy you left behind be light, source of peace to you in your grave and may Aljannatul Firdausi be your final abode. Amen."

Jamila left behind her husband Dr. M. A. Makarfi and five children namely Abdurrahman, Safiya, Aisha, Musa and Maryam. She was buried at Makarfi.

May Allah Subhanahu wata'ala in His infinite mercy grant the souls of Jamila - the first daughter of late Alhaji Sani Borodo - the first son of late Alhammed Muhammad Borodo, eternal peace and restore good health to her husband.

***Borodo wrote in from Kano***