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Keke Napep operator burnt to death at Gudu

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... Witnesses say incident happened during police chase

A tricycle (Keke Napep) operator was yesterday morning burnt to death in Gudu district of Abuja while he was allegedly being chased by the police.

City News learnt from some residents of the area that the incident happened around 6:30 a.m. and that it threw the entire area into confusion, causing heavy traffic.

A witness, Malam Ahmed Kabiru, said the late tricycle rider used to pick up a food vendor from Area One on a daily basis to her shop at Civil Defence stand in Gudu market, where she sells food. According to the witness, the keke operator met his death when a police van started chasing him from Apo bridge down to Gudu junction, where he was overheard telling the officers that he didn't have N500 to give them.

Kabiru said as he was about to negotiate the bend at the junction, the Keke Napep fell and caught fire.

"I heard him categorically shouting on top of his voice to the police officers that he didn't have money to give to them but the police kept pursuing him until the tricycle suddenly hit something and tumbled, then caught fire. The food inside the keke fell out and the food vendor jumped off but the tricycle driver couldn't escape and was burnt to death in it," he narrated.

The witness said as soon as the police saw that the tricycle had caught fire, they drove off and that no immediate help was there to rescue the rider.

A Keke Napep operator in Gudu, who also witnessed the incident, alleged that the police always demanded for money from them and because the deceased didn't give them any, that was why the police officers chased him to his death.

"They always collect money from us, ranging from N500 to N3,000. They pursued him till he died. He was a cheerful and gentle colleague but he was running because he had no money. No police officer was around to help rescue him and he was burnt to death. Some police officers later came in a Hilux van and carried his burnt remains away and they didn't even allow us to pay our last respects to our colleague," he said.

The food seller, who was visibly shaken, also informed City News that the police caused the death of the driver.

But the Durumi Divisional Police Officer (DPO), Superintendent Louis Ibeh, said none of his police officers were there when the accident happened. He said what he was told was that the deceased was on top speed when he hit a pavement and tumbled.

The DPO said in the process, the Keke Napep went up in flames and burnt him to

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death.

The FCT police spokesman, Assistant Superintendent Anjuguri Manzah, corroborated the DPO's account and denied police involvement in the incident.

"When a tragic thing like this happens, a lot of people will start looking for people to put the blame on. Police cannot instigate accident or cause it, as we are out to protect lives and properties of the general public. I can also tell you that no police officer demanded money from anybody," he claimed.

In the meantime, the FCT Commissioner of Police, CP Wilson Inalegwu, has enjoined commuters plying the roads within the Federal Capital Territory to always exercise restraint and observe speed limits in order to forestall avoidable accidents that could lead to injury, loss of lives and property.

A statement by the command's Public Relations Officer, Assistant Superintendent Anjuguri Manzah, said the commissioner was reacting to an unfortunate lone accident involving a tricycle operator popularly called Keke Napep in the early hours of yesterday at Gudu. According to the statement, the victim was on top speed when he lost control and the tricycle somersaulted before it went up in flames.


The statement stated that an individual believed to be the driver was burnt beyond recognition.

"While regretting the unfortunate incident, CP Wilson Inalegwu, has ordered a full scale investigation into the matter," the statement read in part.

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