

6 months after death, deceased's family seeks release of body from police

From Kehinde Akinyemi, Abeokuta

The family members of late Lookman Odeyemi, a 25-year-old blacksmith, who they maintained was killed by the police on April 25, 2017 at the Itesi area of Abeokuta, Ogun State, have appealed to the State Commissioner of Police, Illiyasu Ahmed, to effect the release of his corpse to them for burial.

Odeyemi was allegedly cut down by bullets from a police team who had visited the area to restore peace after two gangs had engaged each other in a supremacy battle.

Our correspondent gathered that the deceased, an orphan, had gone to Itesi about 7.30pm to return an equipment used to repair a car when he was caught in the web of the visiting police team. While the gang members were said to have taken took to their heels in different directions, Odeyemi, still with the equipment in his possession, was arrested and immediately handcuffed.

His relatives said that despite his plea that he was being unjustly arrested, the police team pounced on him, and as he attempted to flee, the policemen allegedly shot two bullets into him, killing him instantly.

Since then, all efforts to collect his remains to be buried by the family had been abortive.

His uncle, Isiaka Odeyemi, told our correspondent that immediately the family members received information about the shooting, "We went to the Oke Itoku police station to tell the policemen that our brother was innocently killed. But what we were told was that Lookman was a member of a robbery gang terrorising the area and had been on the police wanted list before he met his Waterloo on the night.

"He had gone to return the materials he used to repair another man's car as he was still struggling to buy his own. In fact, the people at his workshop confirmed that he was at his place of work on the fateful day before he was called to go and repair the car. Since then, all efforts to get Lookman's remains for burial have been abortive, all because we don't know anybody. We appeal to the Commissioner for Police to please assist us to release his corpse."

When contacted yesterday, the command police spokesman, Abimbola Oyeyemi, told our correspondent to give him 20 minutes to enable him get more information on the matter. More than an hour later, when our correspondent called his number many times, it was not available.