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Monday, April 09, 2018

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## General

### Man, 35, killed over mangoes

By Ahmed Tahir Ajobe, Minna | Publish Date: Apr 7 2018 4:00AM

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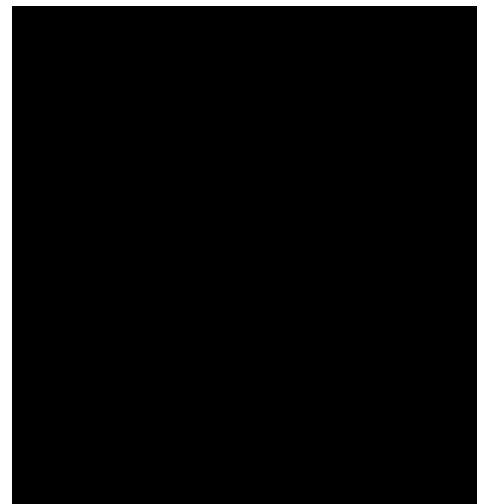


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Ibrahim Ayide, 70, sat on a mat under a mango tree just outside his compound when Daily Trust visited him in Bangi, Maringa Local Government Area of Niger State penultimate Thursday.



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Family members and sympathisers had just interred his son, 35-year-old Luka Makama, who was allegedly beaten to death for plucking five mangoes while hunting in a farm five days earlier.

He was still in shock and could not respond to this reporter's inquiry on what really happened, but only pointed at where he was laid to rest.

The deceased's mother, 65-year-old Sabatu Ibrahim, his brother, 30-year-old Markus Ibrahim and the Mai Angwar Shiku, 51-year-old Yakubu Maidawa, told the story of how the father of three met his death in the hands of operatives of the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) who allegedly beat him to death for stealing mangoes.

According to the mother, Luka, who was a hunter, went out as usual that morning, but never returned. His father was said to be the first to raise an alarm after waiting endlessly for him.

His younger brother led a search party which included Sani and Mohammed, the deceased's friends. However, before the search party returned, news had spread that Luka was sighted on a motorcycle with an official of the NSCDC with his hands tied behind. Some youths mobilized to the NSCDC office only to discover his corpse on the floor in the office. They then sent a representation to the police station in Bangi to report the matter, while elders tried to calm the fraying nerves.

The Mai Angwar told Daily Trust that he was at the General Hospital where he took one of his sons for treatment when he got the news and made for the police station.

"I was on the way to the police station when I saw some policemen with a corpse in their vehicle and I asked whose corpse it was. They told me it was Luka Makama's corpse and when I asked what happened, they told me he was caught with five mangoes which he allegedly plucked from one Abubakar Isah's farm", he said.

He said when he asked who killed him, they told him he was tortured to death by NSDC operatives. He said when he took a closer look at the corpse, he noticed that the deceased had both legs and hands tied without his clothes on.

He said the police had informed him that the NSCDC officials who allegedly tortured Luka to death and the owner of the mango tree who invited the officers had been arrested for questioning.

The Mai Angwar said the police released the corpse to them for burial after an autopsy was conducted with a preliminary investigation.

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From the police account, the owner of the farm told them during interrogation that he went to the farm to meet the deceased eating a mango while holding four others. He said he confronted the deceased for venturing into his farm and he begged that he was hungry and decided to pluck some mangoes. He said the deceased begged him to forgive him but he refused and called the NSCDC operatives who rushed to the scene. He said they wrestled the deceased to the ground, tied his legs and hands and then took him to their office.

The farm owner said the NSCDC operatives later returned to the farm to inform him that Luka was dead and invited him to their office. He said on getting to the office, he saw the corpse on the floor.

An NSCDC official told the police that they had put the deceased in the cell and a while later he told them that his stomach was aching. He said it was while on his way to get some drugs that a colleague called to tell him that Luka had died.

At the deceased's family, his children, six-year-old Grace and four-year-old Mathew were playing around the compound while two year-old Happiness was strapped to Lydia, the mother's back.

Luka's mother, Sabatu, told Daily Trust that all the family wanted was justice, which the state police command has promised. The command's spokesman, ASP Mohammed Abubakar Dan-Ina, said the case had been transferred to the command headquarters in Minna for investigation. He said the suspects which include the NSCDC official fingered in the case and the mango tree owner would be charged to court as soon as the investigation was concluded.

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