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## Abaji youths protest as police allegedly beat man to death

By Abubakar Sadiq Isah | Published Date Apr 1, 2020 1:33 AM



*Chief Imam of Abaji central mosque, Alhaji Bala Umar, leads the funeral prayers of Saidu Babale, who was allegedly tortured to death by police in Abaji.*

Youths in Abaji have protested over the death of a 25-year -old man, Saidu Babale, allegedly beaten to death by the police in the area.

A resident, who witnessed the alleged police brutality, Abdullahi Kabiru, said that the incident happened last Thursday, around 12: 30 am when some youths, including the deceased allegedly barricaded a road at the Old Market to prevent police officers, led by the Divisional Police Officer (DPO), CSP Umar Musa, on patrol from passing through the street.

He said the youths, who were sleeping outside close to the road as a result of heat, sighted the police vehicle coming and they stood up and used a bench to barricade the road.

According to him, the DPO and his men alighted from the patrol vehicle and removed the barricade but that angered the youths who allegedly hurled stones at the DPO and his men while they took to their heels.

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“The next day the DPO ordered the vigilante members to go after those boys that stoned him and his men. They were traced and arrested, and taken to the station,” he said.

He said the three suspects were allegedly tortured by the police which left one of them unconscious and was rushed to the hospital where he later died.

“When Babale died in hospital, it sparked protest by some youths,” Kabiru said.

An elder brother of the deceased, Abubakar Sadiq Yahaya, who is a former speaker of the council, said the family would seek judicial redress over the death of his brother.

He said he was shocked when a Volkswagen Golf car brought his brother home on the morning of Friday. He said his brother’s unconscious body was bruised and bloodied, and when he asked the driver where he got him from, the driver said it was the Abaji Police Division that asked him to convey his brother home.

Yahaya said he rushed him to the hospital but by 11: pm, he was informed that Babale had died.

“The doctor suggested that an autopsy be carried out on the deceased but when I told our parents they rejected the idea of the autopsy, that he should be brought back home and buried according to Islamic rites,” he said.

He, however, stressed that the family has resolved to take legal action over the death of his younger brother.

Also speaking, Ahmed Abdulkarim, who was arrested alongside the deceased and claimed they were tortured together by the police, said the vigilante took them and handed them over to the police.

He alleged that the police tortured them inside the cell, that the police tied up their hands and legs and hit them with batons.

“They handcuffed our hands after using rope to tie our legs, then they started using their police stick to hit us all over our body, and later pushed us inside the cell,” he said.

Abdulkarim also said the DPO was not around when the police started beating them, but when he later arrived, he ordered more punishment on them.

“When the DPO later came, they brought out something like electric iron and placed it on our body which shocked us,” he alleged.

He said the deceased started gasping inside the cell and they brought him out and kept him at the counter.

“They now gave us water to pour on Saidu and they released <sup>close</sup> one suspect inside the cell who used his car to convey him home,” he said.

The chairman of vigilante in the area, Mohammad Isah, said he arrested and handed over the two boys to the police, while the deceased whom he said proved stubborn to them was later brought to the police station by the mother.

“No vigilante member beat any of them. And even the deceased who resisted going to police station was later brought by the mother herself,” he said.

The special adviser to the chairman of the council on security matters, Barrister Haruna Yakubu Gana, while speaking with our reporter, said he was at home when he received a call that a youth was allegedly beaten to death by the police.

He said he met the Ona of Abaji, Alhaji Adamu Baba Yunusa, and some prominent residents at the deceased’s family house and they later proceeded to the police to ascertain the truth of the incident.

“So we met the DPO at the station to hear from him and he narrated what happened, saying before the three youths were brought to the station, it appeared the deceased couldn’t move again,” he said.

Gana said the matter was still under investigation by the police, adding that the DPO admitted that one of the officers who were involved in the alleged torture has been arrested and detained.

He also said that while they were still at the station, the commissioner of police, Bala Ciroma, called and spoke with the Ona of Abaji and the council chairman, and they both assured that the situation would be put under control.

When contacted by our reporter in his office on Monday, the DPO, CSP Musa, denied that the police were responsible for torturing the deceased.

He said he led a patrol team to the Old Market around 12:30 am within the metropolis in which some youths allegedly used a bench to block the road, saying he alighted with his men from the vehicle to remove the barricade when some youths suddenly hurled stones on him and took to their heels.

“It was the next morning, the vigilante brought those boys and we discovered that one of them could not move in which I asked that three of them be taken to the hospital with one of our patrol vehicles,” he said.

He said he visited the hospital in order to ascertain the state of health of the three youths in which he was informed that one of them gave up, saying both vigilante who brought the three youths to the station and one of his officers have written statements and have been forwarded to the state CID for further investigation.

A funeral prayer was held for the deceased around 12: pm on Saturday, led by the chief Imam of Abaji, Alhaji Bala Umar, and some prominent persons in the area.

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