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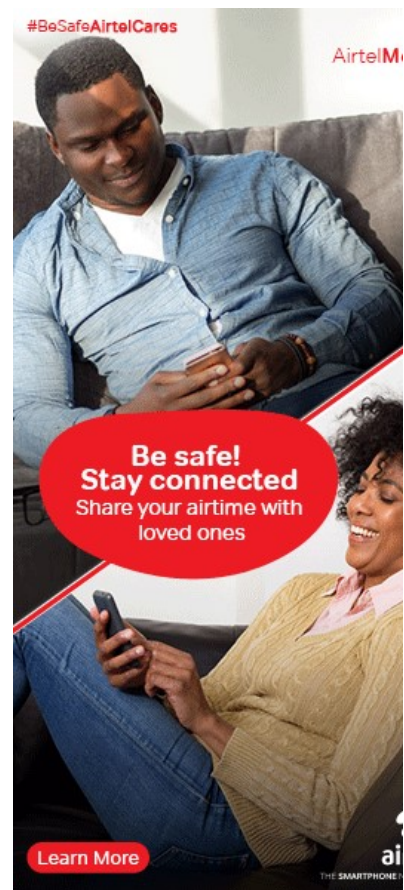
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Kaduna prison riot: we want corpse of our relative for burial – family

By Maryam Ahmadu-Suka & Mohammed Ibrahim Yaba, Kaduna | Published Date Apr 11, 2020 4:38 AM



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When Hammed Abdullahi, one of the inmates of the Kaduna Correctional Centre who died in the recent riot, was arrested three years ago for allegedly stabbing a man to death in the

Tudun Nupawa area of the state, members of his family never thought it was the last time they would see him alive. They knew him as Muhammad.

He was a citizen of the Federal Republic of Niger who sold food along Lagos Street to make a living.

According to Abdullahi's distant relative, Talatu Haruna, she heard of his death on the internet, adding, "Up till now, there has not been any contact from the Correctional Service about his death."

Talatu said she used to visit him at the centre three days in a week. "We are usually allowed to visit on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. However, I saw him last in March. Since then, people have been prevented from going into the centre because of coronavirus," she said.

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Narrating how Abdullahi found himself in prison, she said, "Three years ago, he was at the spot where he sold food when he was told that his friend was fighting with another man. He quickly left his place and ran to Tudun Nupawa, where the incident was happening, to intervene.



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“When he got there, he saw his friend and the other man fighting with knives. Unfortunately, his friend stabbed the man and he died, so he was arrested alongside his friend. Though he was a good boy, he had many friends that were stubborn.

“My only prayer is that they should release his corpse to us so that we can bury him according to Islamic rites. I am his closest relative in Nigeria. His parents, wife and child are in Niger.”

Daily Trust Saturday recalls that when the news of a protest by inmates of the Correctional Centre broke out, officials claimed that no inmate was killed, insisting that two of its officers were injured and no fatality was recorded.

However, after much pressure from the media, they admitted that four inmates were killed during the crisis.

It was gathered that the fear of the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) within the centre sparked protests among the inmates when a female inmate suspected of contracting the virus was rushed to the hospital.

The protest was further heightened by an earlier suggestion by the Minister of Interior Rauf Aregbesola, that correctional centres nationwide be decongested to avoid the spread of the disease.

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Following what he described as the outcome of the meeting of the Presidential Task Force on COVID-19, Aregbesola had called for a quick decongestion of correctional centres across the country.

It was learnt that on hearing this, the inmates became expectant of freedom. But rather than receiving news to that effect, they realised that their relatives who used to visit and bring them items were no longer allowed into the facility.



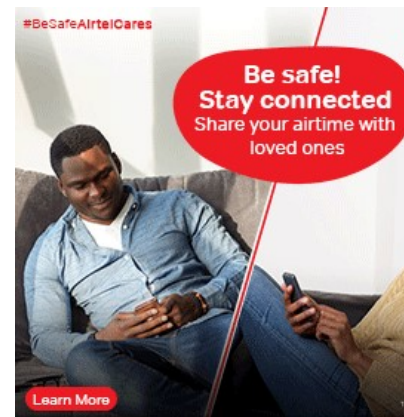
Comptroller-General, Nigerian Prison Services (NPS), Jaafar-Ahmed.

This further aggravated their fear and provoked them into staging a protest, with the hope that they would be granted freedom following the suggestion by the minister. Unfortunately, rather than regain freedom, some of them paid the supreme price.

The Comptroller of Corrections, Kaduna State command, Sanusi Danmusa, had in a statement on Saturday, informed the public of an attempted jail-break on Tuesday, saying, "This release is necessary to assure the public that the command, and indeed the Service, are not trying to hide any fact as purported by a section of the press, especially when life is involved.

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“Four inmates later died in the hospital from the injuries sustained in the fight that ensued while being restrained by the custodial officers from breaking jail. For the avoidance of doubt, all the deceased inmates were from the condemned section of the Custodial Centre where the jail-break occurred.

“A comprehensive investigation has commenced on the directive of the Comptroller-General of the Nigeria Correctional Service (NCS), Alhaji Jafaru Ahmed.”

One of the dead and wounded inmates was a 25-year-old Hammed Abdullahi, who was awaiting trial for a murder case at the Kaduna State High Court 5. He reportedly died on the spot when shot by an unknown security operative during the crisis.

Also, a 24-year-old Lucky Ujokama was reportedly awaiting trial for a rape case at Barnawa Magistrate Court 17, Kaduna while Yahu Salisu, was appearing before Magistrate Court 21 on Ibrahim Taiwo Road, Kaduna for a yet to be confirmed case. Both of them died on Wednesday from gunshots sustained in their buttocks.

Another deceased inmate, a 37-year-old Ibrahim Abubakar, an awaiting trial inmate for armed robbery and popularly called Baba Lolo, had been appearing at Court 3 of the Kaduna State High Court before Justice Kurada.

Two condemned convicts, Ogume Osarome and Oluchukwu Oche, are said to be currently in critical condition, while Wisdom Felix, whose case is being handled by the Kaduna State High Court 3, is said to have been allegedly beaten to coma and yet to recover.

Daily Trust Saturday gathered that an investigation panel has been set up in Abuja, and that there are processes involved before calling relatives of the inmates affected.

When contacted, the public relations officer of the Kaduna State command of the NCS, Nathaniel Dyagas Foni, said he could not comment on the matter because the case is being handled by the national headquarters.

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