



FEATURE

# IN-DEPTH

## How Bauchi DPO tortured, killed two suspects, maimed one over chicken theft

From Hassan Ibrahim, Bauchi

**W**ith two broken legs, Abdulwahab Bello considers himself lucky to be alive after seeing a police officer beat his two friends, Ibrahim Kapala and Ibrahim Babangida to death in Bauchi.

The three men were apprehended for stealing chickens belonging to a retired police officer. Abdulwahab did not know that the chickens were stolen. He did not imagine that they would nearly cost him his life and the lives of his two friends.

"I was on my way when I met two of my friends, Ibrahim Kapala and Ibrahim Babangida, who were looking for buyers of chickens and I suggested a customer at the Muda Lawal Market. I didn't know that they were stolen chickens," he said.

After accompanying his friends to sell the chickens, he went about his business until he saw a team of policemen in a tricycle alongside his friends. He was arrested and driven to the Township Police Station, in Doya Area of Bauchi where the police also brought the man who had bought the chickens.

Apparently, Ibrahim Kapala and Ibrahim Babangida had broken into the home of a retired police officer and stole five chickens. The owner reported that they had taken 24 chickens but would later say he had found 13 of them.

The DPO, Superintendent of Police, Baba Ali Mohammed, however, seemed to have taken the theft as personal and demanded payments for the chickens, alongside bail money from the suspects.

"They said that we should pay the money for the chickens and my mother brought them N4, 000," Bello said. "The DPO told my mother to pay another N2, 000 for my bail before I would be released."

Since his mother did not have any other money to give the police, Bello was detained alongside the other suspects despite paying for the chickens. However, their real ordeal was about to begin.

"We were ordered out of the cell and he asked us to go behind his office where the DPO asked us to lie face down on the ground. He ordered that Ibrahim Kapala should be tied up," he said.

Bello, and his friend Ibrahim Babangida, watched SP Baba Ali Mohammed went and fetched a broken pestle which he used to beat Ibrahim Kapala, who was tied up. He struck the victim on the legs and broke both his legs while other policeman stood by and watched.

"In the process of beating him, he was saying that from today stealing chickens has ended and he continued beating him until he fainted. After he fainted, he started kicking him with his foot even though he was unconscious, until he died," Bello said.

The DPO ordered for the next suspect to be brought forward.

"Immediately he was brought, he descended on him also and broke his legs by using that same pestle. He also used it to hit him on his chest and his back. The

When Ibrahim Kapala, Ibrahim Babangida and Abdulwahab Bello were arrested by the police in Bauchi on suspicion of stealing chickens, they had no idea all their lives were going to be on the line as a murderous DPO, Superintendent Baba Ali Mohammed, allegedly beat two of them to death.



■ Hajara Ismail, whose son Ibrahim Kapala was murdered by the DPO who ordered the corpse be dumped in front of his mother.

victim too fainted," Bello said.

With the two suspects lying lifeless on the ground and the DPO screaming at them "to die," Bello feared that he too would suffer the same fate.

"When it came to me, he used the same pestle to hit me continuously and broke two of my legs where I sustained two fractures on one leg," he said.

The three suspects were then bundled onto the back of a police van and driven to their various houses. At Ibrahim Kapala's house, Bello said, they threw out his lifeless body on the ground and said his relatives should be told he was an armed robber.

"When we reached the house of Ibrahim Babangida, the DPO brought out a big stick and hit him on the head with it. He died subsequently in the hospital," Bello said.

When they got to Bello's house, the SP Baba Ali Mohammed readied his big stick for the final blow.

"When he saw the number of people in the area, he changed his decision," he said.

Ibrahim Kapala's mother, Hajara Ismail, said the day her son's corpse was thrown out of the police van was the saddest in her life.

"I don't know what my son did to the police," she said. "When the police came, they entered our house and asked some boys to carry him in and they asked them to dump him for me inside the house. Then, the DPO said, here's the corpse of your son, he's a robber, we arrested him, then he turned and left and then turned again and said we were not the people who did this to him, we too picked him up like that."

She said at 30, her son was unmarried and each time she had asked him about taking a wife, "He'd tell me that he won't



■ Abdulwahab Bello, the lone survivor from the torture of the police officer.

get married now until he help us get our own house."

For Babangida Bala, father of late Ibrahim Babangida, his mind has never been at peace since the incident.

"I have not been sleeping ever since my son Ibrahim Babangida was tortured to death by the police who are expected to protect lives and property of the masses," he said.

"When I heard that my son, alongside his two friends, were arrested for stealing chickens, I refused to go and bail him, expecting that the police would take them to court for prosecution, but unfortunately they took the law into their hands," he said.

He called on the Inspector General of Police to ensure that the case is not swept under the carpet, a call echoed by Alhaji Bello Mukhtar, father of the survivor, Abdulwahab Bello.

"When a policeman takes the laws into his hands and kills your son, tomorrow if you see him, what would you do to him?" Mukhtar asked.

"What I have spent so far in treating my son is more than N100,000. This has not been easy for me at all if not because of



■ Bauchi State Commissioner of Police, Lawan Tanko Jimeta

the intervention of one of my sisters who has been helpful in footing his medical bills," he said.

Meanwhile, the Bauchi State Police Command said it has launched a full investigation into the alleged torture and dehumanization leading to the death of the suspects.

The Command's Public Relation Officer DSP Ahmed Mohammed Wakili said that already, the State Police Commissioner, Lawan Tanko Jimeta has ordered for a full investigation of the incidence.

Similarly, a human rights group, Prison Inmate Development Initiative (PIDI-Nigeria) has written a petition on the incidence.

In the petition dated 23rd July 2020, and signed by Executive Director Mbami Sabka Iliya, submitted to the Commissioner of Police in the state on the same date, PIDI requested the Commissioner of Police to charge the DPO and those involved in the alleged torture, extortion and extrajudicial killing of the suspects.

"The available information made known to us shows that the said buyer had already slaughtered one out of the five chickens while the remaining four were recovered," he stated.

The group further said that the buyer was ordered to pay for the five chickens again at the rate of N2,000, which he did, as well as a bail fee of N2,000 naira.

In total, the group said all the suspects paid a total sum of N 22,000 for the chickens and N8,000 as a bail condition. Yet even that was not enough to spare the lives of both Ibrahim Kapala and Ibrahim Babangida.

While demanding justice for the victims, PIDI also demanded that the outcome of the investigation be made public for the interest of justice and the said DPO punished to serve as a deterrent to others.