

#EndSARS: Family Members Besiege LASUTH, Mainland Hospital Over Missing Persons

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FROM ABIODUN ALADE, LAGOS



Family members looking for their loved ones, who went missing during the recent #EndSARS protest have besieged the Lagos State University Teaching Hospital, LASUTH, Ikeja and the Mainland Hospital, formerly known as Infectious Disease Hospital, IDH, Yaba.

The family members visited the facilities in response to the announcement made by the Lagos State Chief Coroner, Hon. Justice M. A Dada, on Wednesday, calling for the identification of missing persons between October 19 and 27, 2020 – a period that witnessed protests against police brutality and disbandment of the Special Anti-Robbery Squad.

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In the public announcement, Dada gave next-of-kin of the missing persons two weeks to provide means of identification of themselves and their missing loved ones so as to assist the identification exercise.



Missing Person Chinedu Agbasielo

According to the chief coroner, it is only after a definitive scientific identification that the bodies of the deceased shall be released for burial.

It was mixed feelings for the family members, who were kept at the Lecture Theatre/Demo Room of the department of pathology and forensic medicine, as some of them saw their missing loved ones while others were not so lucky.

Seventy-three-year-old Adijatu Ogunfowora shed tears uncontrollably while narrating how her only son, 38-year-old Sunday Adeyemi Ogunfowora, was killed during the protest at Ifako Gbagada on October 15.

“My only son killed by a stray bullet”

The elderly woman, who is a widow and had lost a daughter as well, said she is from Ijebu in Ogun State but gave birth to her seven children in Lagos. She was in the company of her daughter, Mosunmola, and son-in-law, Nicole Olatokunbo.

“He was killed by a stray bullet during the protest. He lives on the street where the protest was held. After he was shot, we ran to Ifako Police Station but they didn’t release his body to us.



Mrs Ogunfowora

“At first, they denied having his body in their custody, until much later when they said they have taken all those killed to IDH. We found his body at IDH on October 19. The attendant told us that he was brought naked around 1 am on the day he was shot. Imagine, someone that was shot around 10am,” Olatokunbo said while fighting back tears.

The relatives of the deceased said they have been visiting the hospital since October 19, but the management refused to release the body, claiming that it was awaiting approval from the state government.

“Luckily for us, we got a call on Monday that the government has asked them to release corpses related to the #EndSARS protest but we would need to come to LASUTH to process it. We have been asked to provide his photo, our national ID cards and his. We have been here for four hours now but we are yet to get his body,” Olatokunbo added.

The mother, who described her deceased son as easy-going and said she has accepted her fate and not interested in any court case or judicial

panel, pleaded with the government to release the body so she can bury her son.

“I have accepted my fate. I don’t care about what the government is going to do to the perpetrators. They killed him when he should be feeding me. The government should release his corpse, without burying him, I can’t rest. I have accepted my fate but I should not be punished like this. Imagine, coming from Gbadaga and Bariga every week because I want to claim the body of my son at this my age. I can’t sleep, I am always weeping,” she said as other relatives consoled her.