

# IN-DEPTH

## New Year tragedy: How two commercial motorcyclists were killed in Ogun

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It is always a thing of joy to celebrate when the year ends and people look forward to New Year.

These celebrations peaked during New Year's Eve, which is the night of December 31st of every year.

However, while the celebrations went on, tragedy struck in some places, leading to loss of limbs and lives in some instances through avoidable circumstances.

The 2022 New Year's Eve celebration is no exception. Some commercial motorcycle riders popularly known as okada riders in the Adigbe Area of Abeokuta in Ogun State lost two of their members while three others were allegedly injured by soldiers who invaded their place while they were asleep.

Others were also allegedly arrested and detained by some men of the Nigerian Army from the Alamala Barracks in Abeokuta.

An eyewitness, who is an elder brother to one of the deceased Okada riders, Ibrahim Suleiman told Daily Trust that the incident occurred at midnight, some hours after they celebrated New Year.

He said, as okada riders from Borno State, their brothers from Lagos who were also okada riders use to visit during festivities to celebrate with them in Abeokuta and sometimes they also visit them in Lagos to celebrate.

He said: "Some of our friends came to celebrate with us in Abeokuta and on the eve of New Year, we were sitting outside when one Bashir popularly known as Barrister was passing by and one Dauda Yawal called him and pointed at Sulaiman Yawal who was among the friends who visited us. Dauda asked Bashir if he knew Sulaiman.

"Bashir said he could not recognise him. Dauda then said he was among those who led some soldiers to arrest them six years ago, and were later released after they were found not guilty.

"Sulaiman alleged that they were detained at Dodan Barracks for over three months and it was by God's will that they were released after they were found innocent".

He said Sulaiman's allegations did not go down well with Bashir who left in

## 14-year-old felled by stray bullets in her mother's room in Maiduguri



■ Late Sale Abacha killed in the incident

anger. Continuing, he said "A day after, at midnight around 1:00am on Sunday, January 2nd 2022, Bashir (Barrister) and some soldiers in two vehicles stormed our house while we were sleeping shooting sporadically. When I woke up, I heard a voice saying 'shoot anyone that tries to escape'. We were lying on the floor till one of the soldiers entered the room with a torchlight.

"He shouted at us to come out. We obeyed and went out where we saw many others. The soldiers asked Bashir who among them were involved? Bashir pointed at Sulaiman Yawal, Haruna Yusuf and Sadik Gadol, who are now in detention in Alamala Barracks as I speak with you.

"They asked him whether they are the only ones and he said there was another person called Dauda Yawal who was on the run and before they left, we found that they had injured four people, they broke the legs of two and two were left with bullet wounds".

He said the soldiers took the injured ones to the Federal



■ Karagama Abana who's leg was also broken

Medical Centre, Idiaba, Abeokuta and went away with three others who are still with them adding that two others are still missing.

He said the two persons allegedly killed were; Malum Modu Ibrahim and Sale Abacha and they had informed the Divisional Police Officer (DPO), Adigbe Police Station who sent his men that inspected the corpses and later took them to the mortuary. "All this happened at midnight".

### 14-year-old girl hit by stray bullet in Maiduguri

A teenage girl, Maryam Mustapha also lost her life when a stray bullet allegedly fired from a place where some people were lighting fireworks and shooting in the air to welcome the year 2022.

Maryam was sleeping in her mother's room at Umarari Bolori-2 in Maiduguri, Borno State when the stray bullet penetrated the roof and hit her on the forehead.

Narrating what happened, Aisha Muhammed, the mother of the late Maryam said: "We were sleeping together in my room around 12 midnight

on Friday, when I heard a gunshot that woke me up and I shouted 'Bismillah' in fear and confusion. My daughter who was sleeping beside me also woke up not knowing that the gunshot I heard had hit her. She suddenly started screaming, crying for help.

"I quickly switched on a torchlight to see what she was screaming for and on beaming the light on her face, I saw blood gushing out from her head and I asked her what happened? There was no explanation because she was restless. I removed her Hijab to see where the blood was coming out. I quickly found a clean wrapper and tied the head to stop the blood from gushing out.

"I still inquire to know by asking her what the cause of the blood was. I thought she had hit her head on the wardrobe out of panic and confusion and wounded herself not knowing that it was a stray bullet that penetrated through the ceiling and struck her head. I then screamed for assistance from our neighbours to come to our rescue because I did not know what to do. I was confused as she was restless.

"The neighbours and the other people in the house quickly assembled in my room and we were unable to figure out the cause of her injury. But one of our neighbours suspected that it could be a stray bullet though there was no evidence at that time.

"We did not sleep throughout the night because of her condition and she kept on crying up till 5 am when she asked her sister to assist her to the toilet".

The mother said Maryam

managed to perform ablution and offer her two Raka'at early morning prayers and her father came into the room to know her condition before she suddenly fell asleep.

The mother added: "When she wake up from her sleep, after a while, she went unconscious and we quickly rushed her to the nearby clinic. At the clinic, there was no doctor because of the monthly sanitation in Maiduguri but some paramedics attended to her by giving her two drips and some injections. They later called the doctor in charge of the clinic and after examining her condition, he referred us to the specialist hospital."

Aisha further explained that the doctors at the Specialist Hospital also said her condition was beyond them and referred them to the University of Maiduguri Teaching Hospital because her condition had already deteriorated.

She added: "We rushed her to the emergency section where they prescribed some drugs and medicine and asked us to buy for emergency surgery. They also asked us to report the incident to the police but I told them that it was an unknown thing that caused the injury because I did not see the person who injured her even though we were together in the same room.

"When they insisted that we should file the case, her senior brother went to the police station and laid the complaint and they also directed one policeman to follow him to the hospital. Unfortunately, before they returned she died. I must confess that they had tried their best to save her life but God had destined this unfortunate incident to be the cause of her death and no one can change the will of Allah.

"It was after her death that we discovered the spot where the bullet penetrated the ceiling. Also, during her funeral bath, the empty shell of the ammunition was discovered close to her thigh.

Borno State Police Command confirmed the incident through its Public Relations Officer, ASP Sani Kamilu Muhammed, saying that the matter was reported to the police and is under investigation.



■ Mother of the deceased Aish A Muhammed



■ The deceased 14 years-old Maryam Mustapha