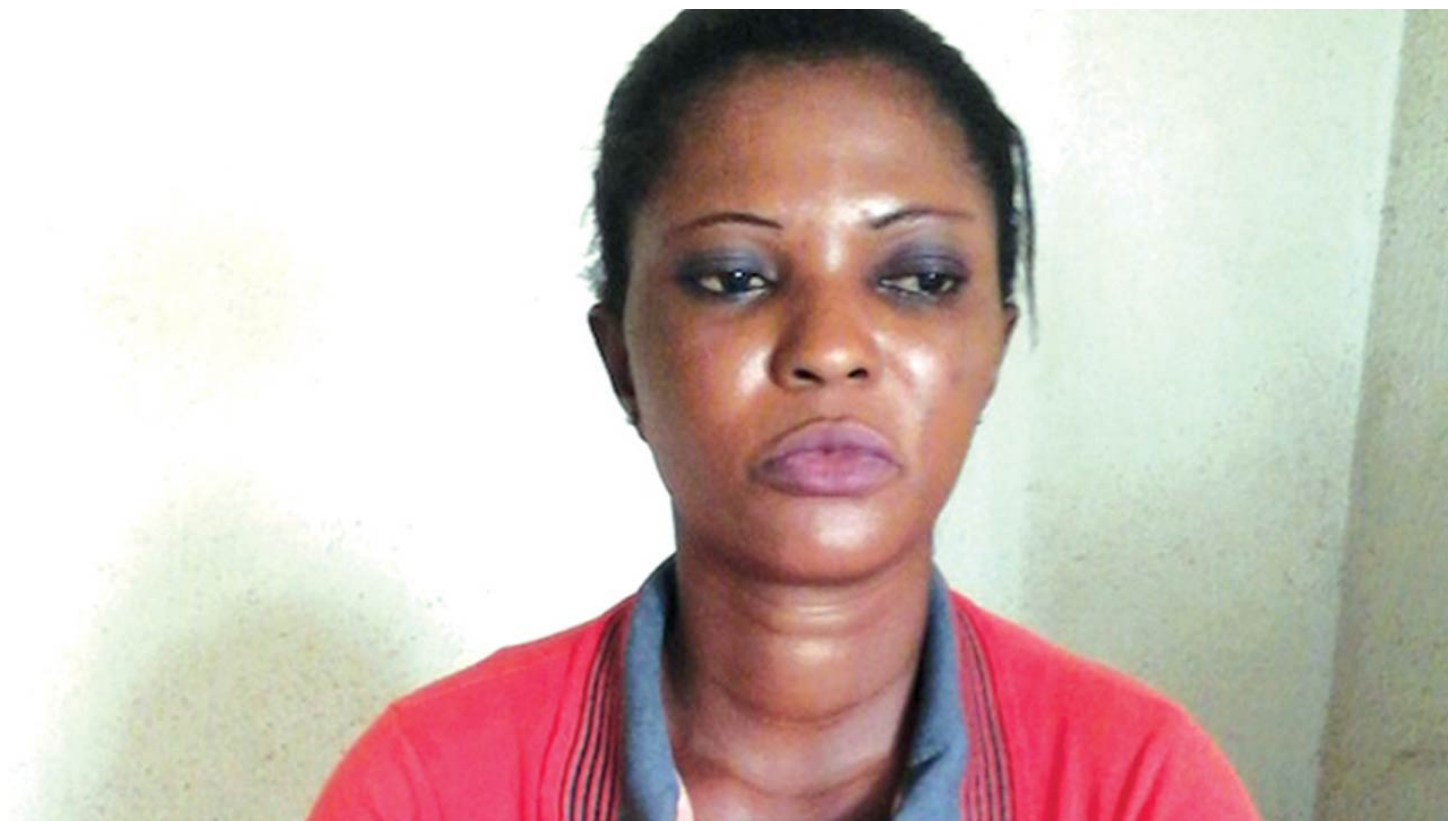


My son's death could have been avoided'

By
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Mrs. Odukomaya

Mother of five, whose son allegedly died from dog's attack wants justice, compensation from animal's owner

The mother of five-year-old Jomiloju Odukomaya, who died as a result of dog bite in Ajegunle, Ikorodu area of Lagos State, two weeks ago, is appealing to the state government and rights groups to ensure that justice is done. She wants to be compensated for the avoidable incident.

At present, Mrs. Patience Odukomaya, 34, has also been sent out of her matrimonial home by her husband, as a result of the incident. This has left her with the responsibility of caring for her suckling baby all alone.

Her predicament started on August 8, 2016, when the boy was sent to buy biscuits at a nearby shop. He was allegedly attacked and bitten by a rabies-infected dog allegedly owned by a resident of Olaniyan Estate, Irawo, Ajegunle in Ikorodu area of the state.

She told The Guardian that the boy was taken to the hospital and the wound was healed.

“But two weeks after, he was running temperature and taken back to the hospital, where he was given an injection. It was at the General Hospital that we conducted a test, where he was diagnosed of contracting rabies.

“We were referred to the Lagos University Teaching Hospital (LUTH), but because it was too late, he died on September 18, 2016.”

Narrating her son's ordeals before his death, the grief-stricken mother said her son manifested cardinal signs of rabies in man such as seizures, hydrophobia, change in tone and later, barked till he died.

She said her son bit her mother like lactating child because of the dreaded disease.

“Immediately, the incident happened, my husband sent me packing and took my first son away. This is a double tragedy for me. I have been sent packing by husband and I am left to cater for myself and the baby all alone.

“I saw the owner of the dog a few days ago, he just told me ‘sorry, madam.’ I am suffering for an act that was avoidable. I can identify the dog that bit my son. It is still there with three others. The man has four dogs.

“Justice must prevail because my son must not die in vain. I am calling on the state government, rights groups and individuals to assist me get justice,” she pleaded.

Odukomaya said since she is now the bread-winner, she needs to be duly compensated, as she would need to get a new accommodation for herself.

The Chairman of the Lagos Chapter of Nigerian Veterinary Medical Association (NVMA), Dr. Alao Mobolaji, who expressed concern on the issue, said cases of dog attacks were on the increase in the state.

He confirmed that the mother and her baby were receiving post-exposure immunisation against rabies “and we are quite hopeful of their protection.”

While noting that the Lagos chapter has over the years shown commitment to the control of rabies by organising advocacies to educate members of the public and also conduct free rabies vaccination in different parts of the state, “it is our hope that government of the day will rise up to consolidate these efforts and will not trivialise the subject as it has, in times past.”

Meanwhile, dogs are the source of the vast majority of human rabies deaths, contributing up to 99% of all rabies transmissions to humans. Rabies is an infectious viral disease that is almost always fatal following the onset of clinical signs.