

Metro

Family of Fashola killed in Ogun customs, smugglers fracas seeks justice

By Gbenga Akinfenwa
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The gruesome murder of 45-year-old Bayo Fashola, a commuter driver, who was last Saturday, July 8, shot during a fracas between men of Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) and smugglers in Papalanto area, Ogun State, has left his family in rude shock, especially his wife, who just gave birth last month.

This incident led to pandemonium, as commuter drivers and residents of the community, out of anger blocked the Sango-Abeokuta expressway for about half an hour, and also launched attack on the customs officers, which left one inspector of Customs, Abdullahi Mohammad Kuso, severely matcheted.



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As at Sunday evening when The Guardian visited the area, aside traces of blood at the scene, the residents were still furious about the development, which they claim is avoidable if the NCS takes protection of human beings as their priority. When The Guardian got to the deceased's house, just a few distance to the park where he was killed, sympathisers, family members and his colleagues converged in front of the house, mourning.

Mr. Kola Oladunjoye, brother to the deceased's wife, narrated that the incident happened around 9:00a.m. when a mobile police officer, who carried smuggled rice was accosted by the customs officers from Ilaro, with the mindset that his colleagues at the Papalanto junction will rescue him. "On getting there, the customs officers were still bent on arresting him, despite the presence of his colleagues, which led to a scuffle, struggling over a gun. It was in the process that the gun triggered and hit Fashola who was waiting for the last passenger for his Ibadan-bound bus. Efforts to revive him failed as he was hit in the stomach."



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He noted that when the officers sensed danger, some fled the scene, but about four others were not lucky, as they jumped into a private car, but the angry residents caught up with them, got hold of one, while the three others left and abandoned their hilux van.

The deceased's wife, Kemi, who is nursing a month and two days-old baby, in an emotion laden voice told The Guardian that she didn't have any premonition that her husband will die soon. "He was a gentle man, full of life. He doesn't fight anyone. I am still in shock because the whole thing is still like a dream to me.

"His killer should not go free. How will I take care of this one month baby? Government and well-meaning Nigerians should come to my aid and avenge my husband's killers. They have been claiming nobody died, but that is not true, justice is what we demand, the killer should be brought to book.

When The Guardian called the Ogun command's Public Relations Officer (PRO), Abdullahi Maiwada, he confirmed the incident, but denied that his colleagues shot and killed the driver as alleged. Contrary to eyewitnesses' reports, he said a team that was sent for reinforcement was attacked, during which someone (not a customs officer) shot into the air, which created chaos in the area.

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