

Senate slams N10m fine on police for killing UNIPORT undergraduate

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The Senate has indicted the Nigeria Police Force for allegedly killing a final year student of the University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Chinedu Obi, and mandated the police authorities to pay to his family N10m as compensation.

Obi, who was arrested on July 19, 2019 after a disagreement with a female phone seller for alleged assault, died in controversial circumstances in police custody, after being denied access to family members and medical care.

In a petition to the Senate by the counsel to the family, Omemiroro Ogedegbe, disclosed that the deceased went to Otta, Ogun State to visit his friend when he met his untimely death.

While testifying before the Senate Committee on Ethics, Privileges and Public Petition, Ogedegbe said the deceased did not resist arrest contrary to police officer's claim.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Ogbadu Aliyu, claimed that the deceased was arrested, detained and later granted bail and that after his release, he went back to the woman and started beating her and even tried to throw her from a story building.

Aliyu said the deceased, who was rearrested, became violent and tried to demobilise an officer, who shot him on his buttock instead of his legs.

But Ogedegbe, who disagreed with the presentation, stated that the deceased was shot from behind in the right buttock, "which meant that it was not the officer that shot him from behind.

"That all entreaties by the deceased who was in the pool of his own blood to speak with his father were rebuffed by the officers of the NPF who allowed him to die before taking him to Otta General Hospital.

"That the police officers lied as the deceased neither committed an offence, resisted arrest, nor armed at the point of his arrest."

In the report presented to plenary, Chairman, Senate Committee, Ayo Akinyelure (Ondo Central), said the offence of assault alleged by the phone seller was not a capital offence and should not have led to the suspect's arrest and handcuff.

He said: "The police officers did not handle the matter professionally and therefore, the force is culpable in the death of Obi."

The Senate condemned the action of the police for the unprofessional manner it handled the civil matter between the phone seller and the late Obi.

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At a session presided over by Deputy President of the Senate, Ovie Omo-Agege, the lawmakers urged the police to arrest the police officer who shot the late Obi to for prosecution, according to the laws of the land.

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