
SARS officials tortured my brother to death, petitioner tells panel

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Abunike identifies lawyer who assaulted him in custody

A businessman, Chukwu Vincent, yesterday, told Lagos State Judicial Panel on Restitution for Victims of SARS Abuses and Other Related Matters how his cousin, Bassey Ejiagwa Cheka, who is now dead, suffered loss of memory and developed a brain tumour due to torture from operatives of the squad.

In his testimony before the panel, chaired by Justice Doris Okuwobi (rtd), Vincent said: “After struggling with failing health for six years due to torture by police officers attached to SARS, Cheka died on November 17, 2020 in his village in Imo State.

“We relocated him back to Imo from Lagos as his health continued to deteriorate and we spent a lot.”

In his evidence led by his counsel, Olalekan Gazali, the victim told the panel that his cousin was arrested by police officers at Igando area of Lagos and taken to the Igando Police Station in May 2014 while coming back from Alaba International Market, Lagos, where he worked. He was detained at Igando police station for five days, tortured and they broke his two legs with iron hammer.

He was later transferred to SARS office in Ikeja where he was further tortured. Cheka’s head was also broken with the butt of a gun, which led to fracture of his skull.

“When he was released, he couldn’t walk anymore and could not even remember certain things again.”

Meanwhile, the panel, which later admitted a copy of a court judgment and some of the hospital receipts worth N1 million as exhibits, adjourned the cross-examination to December 4, 2020.

In another development, the panel and the audience were left in shock when a petitioner, Mr. Okolieagu Abunike, pointed at one of the counsel in the police defence team, Mr. Joseph Ebosereme, and accused him of having assaulted him in 2012 while he was in custody of the Federal Special Anti-Robbery Squad (FSARS).

Abunike said that FSARS operatives detained and tortured him for 47 days at their Ikeja office without trial and Ebosereme allegedly slapped him four times at the State Criminal Investigating and Intelligence Department (SCIID), Panti, when he went to serve the police a court process.

Ebosereme promptly denied the allegation, claiming that the situation arose following his refusal to compromise his integrity in the N200 million-judgment debt recovery



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case involving a law firm linked with Abunike.

The drama started when Abunike sought permission from the panel to speak after he was cross-examined by the police counsel, Mr. Emmanuel Eze.