

Police inspector arraigned for killing tricycle rider in Port Harcourt

By Ann Godwin, Port Harcourt

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Commercial bus operators protest police brutalization of colleague over refusal to pay N100

The Rivers State Police Command has arraigned a police inspector, Oba Christian, accused of shooting and killing a tricycle operator, Ikechukwu Ikechi, at Elikpokodu community in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area on December 10, 2020.

The command accused Inspector Christian of killing Ikechi by firing him on the left side of his jaw with AK-47 rifle. The command said the officer committed an offence punishable under the section 319 (1) of the criminal code, Cap 37, Vol.11, Laws of Rivers State of Nigeria 1999.

The Chief Magistrate, A.O. Amadi-Nna declined jurisdiction on the matter and ordered that the case file be transferred to Department of Public Prosecution for advice, before adjourning the case till February 25, 2021.

This is just as chaos erupted the state capital, Port Harcourt yesterday at Ada-George following a clash between the police and bus drivers over alleged refusal to pay N100 bribe to the officers.

Aggrieved commercial bus operators took to the streets and blocked the Chinda axis of Ada George Road, leading to long hours of gridlock over brutalization of their colleague by the police. The driver and his conductor were brutalized for refusing to part with N100 bribe.

The drivers lamented the incessant extortion they face and called on the Commissioner of Police, Joseph Mukan, to caution his officers.

Drivers' Welfare Chairman, Choba Unit, Bestman Chile, told newsmen that the policeman involved had asked the bus driver to pay a certain amount of money, which the driver refused. Chile said the incident led to a fight and the policeman called his colleagues who beat up and stripped the driver before vandalizing his bus.

The trend of police officers killing innocent citizens in the state over bribe or petty arguments has become a recurring issue, especially after a nationwide #EndSARS protest against police brutality.

At the weekend, a 38-year-old father of three was killed in Port Harcourt following altercations. The Commissioner of Police, Joseph Mukah, has condemned the act, but nothing serious has been done to stop the dastardly acts by his officers.

A trigger-happy police sergeant attached to Elelenwo Police Division shot dead Abiodun Jimoh, in Elelenwo community of Obio/Akpor Local Government Area when a team of



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policemen arrested the deceased and his younger brother, Ismail Jimoh, while they were returning from a party.

Ismail told journalists in Port Harcourt on Sunday that the killer cop was drunk.

He said: "On Friday night, I was carrying my brother on my motorcycle home when some policemen stopped us with their van. They searched us thoroughly and found our identity cards in our pockets; they didn't see anything that could implicate us. So, their superior officer told them to let us go.

"But one officer insisted that we were criminals and that we must be taken to the station, which we accepted. My late brother entered the police van, but I told them that I was going to ride my motorcycle. So, we started moving to the station. I was in front of the van with my motorcycle, but the van later stopped on the way and I rode back to meet them.

"The officers said since they had arrested us, we must bail ourselves to regain our freedom. They asked how much was on me and I told them that I had just N2,000. When we got to the Elelenwo station, the senior officer in the team returned our phones to us and said we should go. He said I should return later with the particulars of my motorcycle and they would release it."

Ismail said one of the policemen, however, refused to release them. He said trouble started when he told the sergeant to listen to his colleagues and let them go.

"The officer that shot my brother was drunk because I could smell alcohol on him. He refused to let us go, saying we must enter the cell. Other four officers were telling him to let us go, but he refused to listen.

"When I told him to listen to his senior colleagues, he got angry and used his rifle to hit me in the face. While his colleagues tried to hold him, I heard a gunshot, which hit my brother.

"When I turned to look, I saw my brother lying on the floor and battling for his life. I saw that a bullet also hit another policeman. The senior officers dragged away his gun from him," he added.

Ismail explained that several hospitals where his brother was taken to for help refused to admit him. He claimed that the policemen attempted to kill him while they searched for a hospital to treat his late brother. Ismail demanded justice for his brother, saying he must not die in vain.



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