

Metro

Cadet's death: Two EFCC officials face dismissal

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*Cadet's death*

• Group demands probe, prosecution of 'killer' officers

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) has voluntarily handed over two of its officials to the Nigeria Police Force (NPF), for investigation and possible dismissal for fighting over items belonging to a suspect in detention.

The Guardian learnt that the items were medications and some money deposited in the suspect's locker.

The incident, which occurred at Sokoto Zonal Command of the Commission, led to the death of a young officer, an Inspector of the EFCC, Abel Isah Dickson.

EFCC's boss, Abdulrasheed Bawa, who disclosed this, yesterday, at a media briefing in Abuja, said the officials had disagreed over procedures for the custody of items belonging to a suspect in detention, leading to a fight, a conduct, which the Commission frowns at.

According to Bawa, the officer passed away on May 7, 2023, at the Usmanu DanFodiyo University Teaching Hospital, Sokoto, where he was receiving treatment for injuries he sustained, two days earlier, in a scuffle with two other officials: Assistant Superintendent of EFCC, Apata Oluwaseun Odunayo and Inspector of EFCC, Ogbuji Titu Tochukwu.

Bawa, who spoke through EFCC's spokesperson, Wilson Uwujaren, said the two officials are likely to face dismissal if found wanting in line with the act establishing the agency.

He said: "Without prejudice to police investigation, they will in addition, face further disciplinary measures in line with the Commission's regulation.

"The latest information is that a two-count holding charge bordering on criminal conspiracy and culpable homicide has been filed against them at a Chief Magistrate's court, Gwiwa in Sokoto. Both offences are punishable under Sections 60 and 191 of the Sokoto State Penal Code Law, 2019.

"The two officers with whom he had a disagreement have been suspended by the Commission and handed over to the Nigeria Police for further investigation and possible prosecution.

"I am saddened by the incident, and I have extended my heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family. He has, in addition, assured that the Commission will leave no stone unturned in ensuring that those implicated in the death of the officer are brought to justice."

Bawa warned staff of the Commission to ensure that their conduct at all times is moderated by the established code of behaviour as no act of indiscipline would be tolerated.

Meanwhile, the remains of the late officer was interred on Saturday May 13, 2023, in Jos, Plateau State.

However, a civil rights advocacy group, Human Rights Writers Association of Nigeria (HURIWA), has condemned Isah's death during a scuffle with his two colleagues.

The group, in a statement by its national coordinator, Emmanuel Onwubiko, yesterday, demanded a comprehensive probe into the circumstances surrounding the death of the officer after a disagreement with his colleagues.

HURIWA also backed the EFCC's hierarchy for handing over the suspected 'killer officials' to a prosecutorial agency, saying the two indicted EFCC officers should

EFCC boss, Bawa

be transparently prosecuted over the unjust and extra-legal killing of the EFCC cadet.

Although the two officials have been arraigned in a court in Sokoto for culpable homicide, HURIWA said the charge is irregular, hence they should be charged appropriately for murder.

According to HURIWA, the soft charge of culpable homicide was a conspiratorial script to earn the accused killers a soft punishment.

Recall that this is not the first time this incident would occur. For instance, a businessman, Desmond Nunugwo, controversially died in EFCC custody in April 2016 on allegations of defrauding a complainant of N91million. The deceased's family had accused the anti-graft agency then headed by Ibrahim Magu, a retired Assistant Inspector-General of Police (IGP), of killing Nunugwo, who was reportedly healthy before his arrest.

Also, in November 2015, Arowofela Olufemi, a suspect, died in EFCC custody in controversial circumstances.

HURIWA's Onwubiko said: "The death of EFCC inspector, Abel Isah Dickson after a senseless scuffle with his colleagues on the items of a suspect is most

condemnable.

“The Chairman of the commission, Abdulasheed Bawa, must ensure a full investigation into this sad occurrence to avoid a recurrence, as he has done but basically, the prosecutor must amend the charge to reflect the appropriate charge of murder so if found culpable of murder, the accused persons can face the maximum sentence of death or life jail terms.”

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