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## Nigeria: Naval Men Kill Policeman, Injure Another in Abeokuta

**Daily Independent (Lagos)** 13 November 2008

Posted to the web 14 November 2008

Segun Adeleye Abeokuta

Naval officers are in the news for the second week running. Again for the wrong reasons.

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After President Umaru Yar'Adua joined other Nigerians to condemn the way they maltreated a lady in Lagos two weeks ago, two other Naval officers were on Wednesday arrested by the police in Abeokuta for killing a policeman and injuring another.

They murdered Constable Oladiran Abanikanda and injured Constable Nureni Adewale during a scuffle over a waitress at **FX for Nigerian traders** Idera Hotel in Ota, Ogun State.

Abanikanda was confirmed dead on Thursday morning at the Lagos University Teaching Hospital (LUTH), where he had been rushed, and where spirited efforts had been made to save his life.

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Police Area Commander, Adeoye Oyelola, confirmed in a telephone interview that the Naval officers attacked Abanikanda and Nureini at the hotel, popularly known as Plaza, located at the back of the police station in Ota.

He narrated how "the owner of (a local hospital) alerted me that two of my men had (initially) been rushed there after they were stabbed. So, I had to rush there.

"The Constable said he ordered for a drink but one of the Naval officers objected that he owned the lady attendant, and that the Constable, who was not in uniform, should not send her on an errand.

"In the argument that followed, the Naval officer brought out his knife and stabbed the policeman on the back. In an attempt by other policemen to wrestle the first Naval officer to the ground, the second Naval officer bought out his own knife and stabbed them.





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"Then the Naval officers tried to escape. One was arrested on the spot, the other one was caught while loitering around the police station in an attempt to call for reinforcement."

Oyelola said the Naval authorities were at the police area command office on Wednesday night to hold consultations over the incident but that the personnel were not allowed to enter the police station with weapons.

However, Oyelola's account differs from that of the Naval officers who reportedly claimed during police interrogation that their attempt to report assault on them by the Constables led to their arrest.

The Naval officers are being detained in a police station in Abeokuta, and the case has been reported to the Inspector General of Police, Mike Okiro.

The injured policeman is responding to treatment at the Ota General Hospital, where he was transferred from a private hospital.

Deputy Commissioner of Police, Bassey Inyang, said the matter is being handled by the State Criminal Investigation Department.

This is the second negative news emerging from Naval ranks in as many weeks.

On Monday, Chief of Defence Staff, Air Marshal Paul Dike, ordered a new probe of the assault in Lagos two weeks ago of Uzoma Okere by officers attached to Rear Admiral Harry Arogundade.

They stripped her naked.

Naval Director of Public Relations, Commodore David Nabaida, had announced penultimate Thursday that an investigation had begun, blaming the press for publishing a "one-sided story."

But a statement issued on Monday in Abuja by the Director of Defence Information (DDI), Colonel Adewole Jemitola, said Dike directed that the report of the fresh probe should be submitted to his office immediately it is completed.

Dike expressed concern that military men continue to brutalise civilians even now that efforts are being made by the military authorities to redeem their battered image.

He promised to apply the rule of law in the matter.

Regardless of that pledge, Lagos lawmakers urged Yar'Adua himself to ensure that justice is done.

State Assembly Deputy Speaker, Adefunmilayo Tejuoso, moved a motion in which she described the assault as barbaric, something to be totally condemned.

She recalled that Okere was beaten to the extent that her shirt was torn, her body exposed, and was dragged into the Naval premises where she was subjected to further physical assault.

"We should not allow this injustice to go just like that, we are in a democratic setting and what the Naval officers have done is uncilvilsed," Tejuoso maintained.

Sanai Agunbiade added that the assault is dehumanising, barbaric, and condemnable, stressing that the Naval authorities should probe it and take disciplinary action against the officers.

The Assembly resolved to send a letter to the Presidency and the Naval authorities demanding the condemnation of Arogundade and his aides.

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