

Coroner Court ordered arrest of cop over suspect's death

A coroner inquest in Lagos yesterday ordered the arrest and prosecution of one Police Inspector, John Sawyer of the state command for his failure to notify the authorities of the death in custody of an herbalist Samson Adeleke Adekoya.

Sawyer, said the magistrate Mrs. Ariyike Ipaye-Nwachukwu, who presided over the inquest contravened section 39 of the coroner system's law of Lagos State.

She also ordered the state's police boss, Mr. Marvel Akpoyibo to conduct an internal investigation of Sawyer and others who might be connected with the death of Adekoya and prosecute them if found culpable.

The verdict of the coroner inquest was instituted at the instance of a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO), Access to Justice (AJ), which is the first in the state under the new law.

However, the deceased was given mass burial in line with a standing instruction from the state's Health Ministry for hospitals to bury unclaimed corpses two months after they are deposited due to lack of facilities.

The mass burial had effectively denied the family the opportunity of conducting a post-mortem on Adekoya to ascertain the cause of his death.

Ipaye-Nwachukwu on the issue of mass burial accorded unclaimed corpses in the state hospitals, said the Health Ministry should publish the names of the dead in newspapers before their burial to enable the relatives have information about the death of their loved ones.

To forestall future occurrence of death in custody, Ipaye-Nwachukwu called on the Police to be more responsive to the health needs of their detainees.

Adekoya, the inquest established died in Police custody few days after he was arrested over alleged conspiracy to commit armed robbery and that there were premeditated attempt to conceal his death.

The inquest arrived at the conclusion that the Police have a case to answer when it noted that the testimony of the Police and that of the Deputy Medical Director of Ikorodu General Hospital, Dr. Mobolaji Olukoya did not tally.

Dr. Olukoya said Adekoya was brought in dead (BID) contrary to the police claim that he died at the hospital after waiting for hours without getting medical attention. The doctor also tendered an extract of the

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Police's crime diary, which was dated February 11, 2008 and prepared by Sawyer, which showed that Adekoya died seven hours before he was taken to the Ikorodu General Hospital.

AJ also tendered evidence to show that the Police deposited another corpse at the Ikorodu General Hospital mortuary, believed to be that of a member of Adekoya's alleged gang, five days before Adekoya was brought in dead.

Sawyer told the inquest that Adekoya was being taken to Ikorodu to arrest other fleeing members of his gang when he suddenly began to foam in his

mouth and they had to make a detour to the hospital.

The police had earlier told the late Adekoya's wife that he took ill while in custody and died at the Lagos State Teaching Hospital (LASUTH), even as they advised her not to bother looking for his corpse at the hospital mortuary.

The late Adekoya's wife, Abidemi and his brother gave evidence at the inquest concerning his condition when they met and spoke with him at the state's Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS)'s custody as they said he was "badly beaten, had swollen face and eyes, and he appeared petrified over the grim prospect of his fate at SARS."

Akwa Ibom launches mass

WORRIED by the prevailing food crisis in the country occasioned by global economic downturn, the Akwa Ibom State Government has launched massive agricultural intervention scheme to cushion the effects.

Speaking at a two-day workshop for farmers by Akwa Ibom Youths in Agriculture (AKYA) in Oruk Anam Local Government Area of the state, the Commissioner for Agriculture, Prof. Etok Ekanem said the youths should be the arrowhead of the scheme.

The workshop, which held at the state College of Agriculture, Obio Akpa, was tagged: "Repositioning the Youths for Global Food Challenges".

According to Ekanem, Governor Godswill Akpabio has demonstrated enough commitment to agriculture by providing funds to drive the sector.

He pointed out that the governor has urged all members of the state executive council to show more than a passing interest in agriculture by owning their own farms.

Besides, local government chairmen and other officials, state lawmakers, personal aides of government functionaries were to return to their local government areas for grassroots farming.

He said the injection of some agricultural experts in the sector by Akpabio was a key step towards realizing one of the Seven-points agenda of President Umar Musa Yar'Adua.

For farmers to access loans for agricultural purposes, Ekanem announced plans by government to convert the Agricultural Loans Board (ALB), into credit management agency to facilitate the loan for agric business. In the same vein, the Central Bank of Nigeria

agric scheme

■ Inibong EKPONTA, Uyo ■

and Union Bank, which also brokered the workshop, asked participants, especially local government chairmen to encourage farming by tapping from bank's facilities.

The state chairman of the Youth Farmers Association, Prince Michael Ekanem said the forum became necessary to compliment agricultural drive of the state government. He said the association plans to select no fewer than 10 farmers in each ward across the 31 local government areas to boost the scheme.

The farmers, he disclosed, would be empowered with farm implements including livestock, birds, fish fingerlings and seedlings to fast-track the scheme. The state has also acquired 200 hectares of land in 25 local government areas for agricultural purposes.

LOSS OF DOCUMENT

Original land allocation belonging to Ambassador Mohammed S. Kangiwa for Plot No. 180 of about 2000m² located at Nbora District is missing. If found, return to AGIS or the nearest police station.

LOSS OF DOCUMENT

The general public is hereby notified of the loss of the land documents belonging to Prince Engineer Arthur Eze, located at Plot 121 Cadastral Zone 4B Jabi Abuja. If found please contact FCDA Abuja or call. 07031962680 or 08057620227.