

# 'I've been sentenced to eternal misery'

• Father of 18-year-old 'killed by friends' seeks justice

**W**HO will wipe the tears of the father of an 18-year-old man, Abubakar Mustapha, who died on June 7 in the Iloro area of Agege, a Lagos suburb? It was just a few days to his 19th birthday.

He was allegedly lured by one of his friends "to help settle a fight." But unknown to him, it was a set-up by an embittered friend to settle old scores. He was allegedly stabbed to death with an arrow by his assailants.

It was pin-drop silence in his parents' home - 22, Shomide Street, Idimangoro, Agege, Lagos - when this reporter visited on Monday.

They were yet to put the traumatic experience behind them - a month after.

Abubakar Amodu, the bereaved father, fought tears as he recalled the incident that has torn the family's joy.

The 51-year-old indigene of Okaba in Anpka Local Government Area of Kogi State relived his son's last minutes: "I had sent him on an errand within the neighbourhood; I did not know it would be the last time I would see him. He was said to have been invited by one of his friends to settle a quarrel with some of his friends. He did not know it was a conspiracy to lure him to death.

"He ran into an ambush laid for him by the very people he was to reconcile with. A fight broke out and he was allegedly hit with an arrow in the abdomen. He fell down in a pool of his blood, while his attackers ran away. My son was taken to the Orile-Agege General Hospital where he was con-

'My life has not been the same since. It will certainly take a long time for me to get over his gruesome killing ... a few days to his 19th birthday'

By Kunle Akinrinade

firmed dead by doctors."

He bemoaned: "I have been sentenced to eternal misery. My life has not been the same since. It will certainly take a long time for me to get over his gruesome killing, more so that it happened a few days to his 19th birthday. He was looking forward to celebrating his birthday on July 19 before his death."

An eyewitness who preferred anonymity, also said: "At about 1 pm on that day, I was ironing some clothes when he (Mustapha) left to carry out some tasks for his father. A few minutes later, a student in one of the schools near the spot where Mustapha was attacked alerted me that some boys were fighting him. I ran there. But before I got there, he had been stabbed in the abdomen.

"He collapsed while I was trying to rescue him from the boys who were more than twenty. One of them tried to hit him with an umbrella, but I held his hands. They ran away on sighting men of the

Dopemu Police Station. The policemen tried to rescue him too, but he had collapsed with blood gushing out of his abdomen. He could not talk but was gasping for breath."

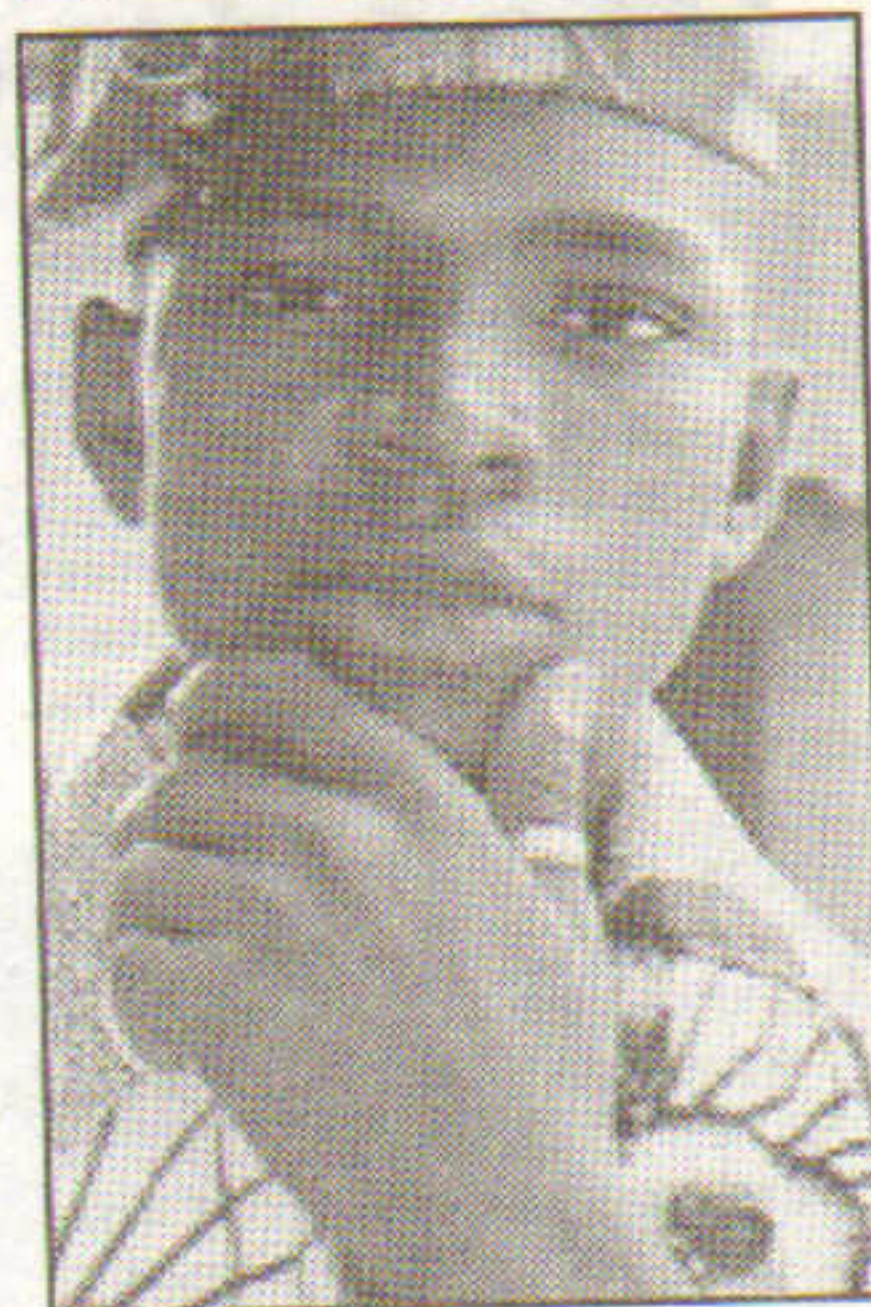
"With the policemen, we took him to a nearby public health centre, but the doctors there refused to attend to him. We later took him to Orile-Agege General Hospital, where he was confirmed dead," he said, adding: "One of his friends, Wasiu, who accompanied him to the scene of the incident, was seriously beaten. He is still nursing swollen eyes."

The late Mustapha, he recalled, had quarreled with one of his friends called Idowu on Tuesday June 4, when the latter was beating an unidentified boy in the community. He had allegedly rebuked Idowu for his action and this led to an altercation that was settled the next day. The truce, it was learnt, did not go down well with Idowu.

"Mustapha was unassuming and he detested bickering. And that must have been the reason he decided to answer the call for rapprochement, not knowing that it was a bait to kill him by the heartless boys. It is indeed sad that those who killed Mustapha were Junior Secondary School (JSS) students from some of the public schools in the community," the source added.

The deceased, according to his father, had abandoned school because "some boys were harassing him for no clear reason."

"In order not to be idle, he decided to learn spray paint-



• The late Mustapha

ing. And he was following me to my workshop, pending when he would find a better school to continue his education. He was to relocate to Kaduna that weekend to continue his studies with one of my siblings," Amodu said.

He added: "In fact, he could have left Lagos two weeks earlier if not for the fact that I could not raise his transport fare because of my situation. Now, see what the wicked boys have done to him."

It was gathered that the police had made some arrests. However, the late Mustapha's father said it was against the tenets of Islam not to bury the dead promptly; hence, he appealed to police authorities to expedite their investigations to allow him bury his son.

He pleaded: "Mustapha is my first son and his gruesome killing by his friends should not be swept under the carpet because I learnt that the families of my son's alleged killers, who are being held in police custody, are making efforts to secure their freedom."

Though Police spokesperson Ngozi Braide initially said she was yet to confirm the incident, police sources told *The Nation* yesterday that investigations were in top gear on the matter.

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