

'Oh, my joy is gone'



•Widow seeks cause of her husband's death

Sympathisers found it hectic bringing the emotions of the 25-year-old woman under control yesterday. She wept like a baby over the death of her husband in yet inscrutable circumstances.

"God, my joy is gone!" Mrs. Happiness Okpok, mother of four, exclaimed as a thick crowd of sympathisers struggled to pacify her at the family's Anuoluwapo Street, Ifako-Gbagada, Lagos home.

"I beg the state Commissioner of Police (Mr Umar Manko) to help unravel the sudden death of my husband. His death is strange," she pleaded.

Narrating her ordeal to *The Nation*, she said her 47-year-old husband, Mr Sunday Okpok, who had for five years, driven his boss, Mr Oludare Senbore, left home as usual about 6 am on June 23, to resume work at Senbore's 12B, Omoyele Pratt Street, off Oladunni Street, Ferrand Estate, Ifako-Gbagada home.

Happiness recalled that when she called to check on her husband about 7pm that day, his phone was switched off, only to receive Senbore's call after 10 pm, asking her to come and see him at Barracks bus stop, Ifako that night.

She said: "I rushed there with a neighbour. On getting there, Mr Senbore and his wife alighted from their car. After they finished discussing in Yoruba language, he handed my husband's phone and wallet to over to me. He told me that Sunday was involved in an accident and that he was taken to the **General Hospital, Broad Street in Lagos**. He asked me to go and see him in the morning.

"I got there only to see my husband with a mask over his face. He could not talk or open his eyes; he could neither move nor hear anything. I was directed to buy some prescribed drugs and I did. I also paid for an x-ray. As it was my husband's turn for the x-ray, I went to inform the medical personnel to bring him. That was when the doctor informed me that my husband had died. I saw my husband's dead body with his tongue out of his mouth."

"Mr Senbore was called. He came and saw the corpse. He paid the mortuary bills for one week and told me to go and arrange with the church for his urgent burial, explaining that there was no need to keep the corpse for long," Happiness said.

She said that she was shocked when she visited the Lion Building Police Headquarters in Lagos, only to be told that there was no case of accident reported there.

Documents on the deceased issued by Dr Salau T.M at the General Hospital, Lagos, on June 24, stated that the late Okpok suffered head injury, following which he died at 12.20 pm that day.

To release the corpse, the mortuary managers demanded police extract, affidavit and Police Release Form among others.

She said she did not know how to get the documents, adding that Senbore "is not helping." She suspects that her husband was murdered but arranged to look like an accident. "Why did he not report to the police if it was an accident?" She asked.

The young widow said her husband left four children with her – two boys and two girls. She said she has no job and no business as she is still nursing the last baby and does not know where to raise the mortuary bills which is N700 per day.

"How do I raise money to transport the corpse to Etinan Local Government Area in Akwa Ibom State, our home town, for burial? How do I raise the children? My husband was owed three months salary before he died", she added.

When contacted, Mr Senbore said his deceased was involved in a tricycle accident on his way to his office, adding that he was not driving him at that time but was riding on a tricycle.

"I only got to know about it after the accident. He was taken to the hospital where I paid for his treatment, but unfortunately, he died the following day," he told *The Nation*, maintaining that he knew nothing about Sunday's death.

He also said he did not know who took Sunday to the hospital.