

'My son's killers are after me'

• Bereaved father urges police IG to ensure justice

By Basirat Braimah

OVER two years after the killing of his son by hoodlums allegedly working for a land owner, a driver with the Lagos State transportation outfit, BRT, Wasiu Afolabi, has urged the Inspector General of Police (IGP), Mohammed Abubakar, to ensure that justice is done.

Afolabi, 58, said the killers of his 21-year-old son, Sikiru, who framed him up by accusing him wrongfully of stealing bags of cement, are also after his life.

"I have been in hiding for some time now because the killers of my son want to kill me. Four attempts have been made on my life for demanding justice over the murder of my son. This is why I'm begging the police IG to step in to ensure justice and protect me," Afolabi told *The Nation* in Lagos yesterday.

Recalling the event that led to the "murder" of Sikiru on October 29, 2011, allegedly by a traditional ruler (Baale) in Igboosoro Opaara village, Ogiro area of Ogun State, he said: "I was at work when my wife suddenly called me, telling me to come and see my son lying on the ground. I demanded to know what happened, but she insisted that I must come home and see it for myself.

"I got home to meet him paralysed. My mother told

me that he was brought home by my elder brother, Akanbi Ali, who found him in a state of coma at Odo Kekere village area of Ogun State, where he was dumped. We took him to the General Hospital, Ikorodu, where it was discovered that he had broken his spinal cord." In the presence of a policeman attached to the Ogoji Police Station, where the case was reported, Sikiru, before he eventually gave up the ghost, reportedly said the Baale and his men attacked him, adding: "They said I stole three bags of cement, which is a lie."

However, the Baale insisted that the late Sikiru stole the cement and confessed to him, prompting him to order the members of the Oodua People's Congress (OPC) who caught him to take him to the police for proper investigations and action.

Ali disagreed, saying that he met the victim was held captive by the ruler and the hoodlums for hours after which he was assaulted and fell into a drain where he broke his spinal cord in the process.

On December 13, 2011, Sikiru died. Since then, his father has been running from pillar to post in a bid to bring the alleged perpetrators to book. "We have taken the case to the State Criminal Investigations De-



• The late Sikiru

partment (SCID), Elewera in Abeokuta; Force CID, Alagbon in Ikoyi and the Force CID XQUAD, Area 10 Garki, Abuja," Afolabi said.

He expressed dissatisfaction with the way some police officers have been handling the case, saying it was why he sought the intervention of the police IG.

"My son is still in the morgue at General Hospital; he is yet to be buried. There is no extent that we have not gone to get justice through various police formations. My main concern now is for the Inspector-General of Police to come to my aid and use his good offices to arrest my son's killers," Afolabi said.

Spokesman to the aggrieved family, Adewale Adetayo, yesterday said the killing of Sikiru had thrown the entire family into indefinite grief, adding that only the genuine intervention of the IGP would bring relief to it.

Representatives of the family, *The Nation* gathered last weekend, are billed to meet with the police chief in Abuja anytime in the week.

The late Madam Akpan and Comfort sustained first-degree burns from the ensuing inferno, but they later died a few days later in the hospital.

Her husband, Anthony Akpan, said his wife and her sister would have survived if there was money to procure the best of medical treatment for them.

Akpan, who hails from Ebonyi State, also said: "On March 19, my wife was hale and hearty while leaving for her shop at Iyana-Ejigbo. There was no premonition that death was lurking around. Before I got to the scene of the incident, some Good Samaritans had rushed my wife and her sister to a private hospital. When I got to the hospital, seeing the level of the burns, I wept."

"I noticed that the treatment they were given was not okay; I took them to the Gen-

wife gave up the ghost.

"As I speak, my wife is lying at a mortuary in Ebonyi State, where we took her body. Since her death, things have not been easy for me and my children because she would take care of our home, even when I did not give her money for the upkeep of our children - two boys and five girls," he said.

Urging fellow Nigerians to come to his aid on the children, he added: "My wife's death is a big loss for me and my children because the burden she left behind for me is too much to bear. I love my wife so much that I would still marry again if given a second chance."

One of his daughters, Nneka, said her mother's death came to her and her siblings as a surprise. "We never expected her to die in that manner," she said.

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