

## CRIME &amp; OTHER STORIES

## WORLD CUP TRAGEDY

## Policeman allegedly chases 22-yr-old into lagoon at Lagos viewing centre

It was a tragic nightfall on June 19, 2014 in Adeniji Adele area of Lagos Island when a policeman attached to Ebute Ero Police Station allegedly chased a 22-year-old tailor, Sulaiman Badmus, to death at a football viewing centre.

The heart-broken father of the deceased, Mr. Alaka Badmus, in an interview with our reporter, explained that the incident took place about 11pm when his son was watching the Japan/Greece tie at a viewing centre in the neighbourhood.

"My son had gone to a viewing centre (near the lagoon) on Adeniji Adele Street to watch the Japan/Greece match on June 19 about 11 pm when a group of police officers from Ebute Ero Police Station stormed the viewing centre to arrest innocent soccer buffs at the venue. In the process, one policeman, aka *Balo* pursued my son until the poor boy fell into the lagoon and drowned. Despite the search launched to retrieve his body, it took three days before the body was found afloat and we buried him on June 21.

"We reported the incident to the Divisional Police Officer (DPO) of the station but he treated the case with levity, arguing that there was no such incident and that none of his men is called *Balo*. "However, the offending officer is attached to the station and is still there as we speak. We reported the unfortunate incident to some titled chiefs in our community and we have also forwarded a petition to the office of the Lagos Commissioner of Police for his intervention. We also wrote to the Office of the Public Defender (OPD). I want justice because the killing of my son has really devastated me a lot. Police should protect citizens and not destroy innocent lives in the society."

A copy of the petition written to police by 55-year-old Alaka reads in part: "Sulaiman Badmus was chased by one policeman



• The late Sulaiman

■ Kunle AKINRINADE ■

policemen left the scene. This development, caused the residents to visit the station, but to our disappointment they were chased away by men of the station who fired indiscriminately, threatening to shoot anyone that dared to complain over the incident. I hold the view that the action of the police in this matter was reckless, high handed and oppressive. It depicts an abuse of power not minding the possible outbreak of violence such action could ignite."

A letter written to the DPO of Ebute Ero Police Division by OPD



• The father of the deceased

called *Balo* until the poor boy fell into the lagoon and drowned. Immediately after this incident, the

signed by its Director, Mrs. O.O Rotimi, urged the officer to ensure that justice is done in the matter.

"The petitioner informed us that his son (Sulaiman) went to watch a football match about 11pm on June 19, 2014 and that while he was sitting with his friends somewhere along the Adeniji Adele Road, a set of police officers suddenly commenced raiding at the said venue. He stated further that due to this development his son was pursued by one officer called *Balo* gun attached to your station until his son ran into an ocean and died in the process of fighting for his life.

"He added that his corpse was later discovered on June 21 when it was sighted floating the ocean and was buried the same day by 4pm. He also said that he had visited your police station on two occasions to report the incident but no positive response has been made to date. It is in the light of the above that we write your office to enable you use your good office to intervene in this matter and ensure that justice is done on the life of the innocent soul that has been lost."

A community leader, Prince Mukaila Akinsomoyin, while berating the offending police officer, mentioned a similar incident in the recent past, saying: "Men of Ebute Ero Police Division have become obsessed with illegal raids under the guise of looking for criminals. A similar incident happened about 2pm on May 7, 2013

when a policeman called Azeez, attached to Ebute Ero Police Station and his team during an illegal raid under Carter Bridge caused a trader called Ibrahim Olaiya to jump into the lagoon and drowned. Men of the police station are reckless in the discharge of their duty and it is high time they are cautioned by the topmost authority in Nigeria Police Force."

When contacted on the telephone, the spokesman of Lagos State Police Command, Ms Ngozi Braide, promised to get back to our reporter. She, however, did not fulfill the promise at press time, while a text message forwarded to her phone line was not replied.

Residents of flood-ravaged com