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- The late Eyitayo

A 39-YEAR-OLD man, Saheed Damilare Eytayo, whose friend was arrested for 'cloning' Lagos State Governor Akinwunmi Ambode's phone number, has allegedly died in the Department of State Services (DSS) custody.

His family is alleging foul play, asking the DSS to explain how he died.

It has refused to collect the body for burial from the DSS until the circumstances of his death are clear.

The late Eyitayo was arrested in the midnight of April 4 by the DSS operatives, who were on the trail of the syndicate that cloned Ambode's mobile number. He was taken to the DSS office at Shangisha, where he allegedly died during interrogation.



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The Nation learnt that the DSS operatives were acting on information that Rilwanu Jamiu, a member of the syndicate, might be hiding in the late Eytayo's home at 37, Aje Street, Pleasure Bus Stop in Iyana Ipaja.

The DSS operatives allegedly broke into the late Eyitayo's apartment while he was asleep. On being woken up, he was reportedly beaten and his hands and legs chained. Eyewitnesses told *The Nation* that the DSS operatives grilled him for minutes, asking him of Jamiu's whereabouts.

A resident, who pleaded not to be named, said: "I overheard Eytayo telling the DSS people that the person they were looking for does not stay with him. He told them the suspect was his friend and only visited him the previous day. But, his explanation did not convince them. They beat him mercilessly till blood came out of his face. We could not recognise him again."

The DSS operatives, *The Nation* gathered, moved to other apartments in the building, allegedly beating occupants and searching their rooms for the suspect. After three hours, the DSS operatives whisked Eytayo to their Shangisha office.

Jamiu, it was learnt, was arrested that day in Alakuko.

The late Eytayo's friends, who had been going to the DSS office for his bail, were kept in the dark about his death. On April 6, two days after his death, the DSS Director, invited his landlord, a pastor, to help the agency look for his family members.

The landlord said: "Two days after he was taken away in chains, I was invited by the DSS Director. When

I got there, the Director called me to his office and told me Eyitayo slumped during interrogation. He said they tried to stabilise him medically but he eventually died. The director asked me to help find his family members, but I told him I did not know anybody with him.

“The DSS copied out five numbers from the late Eyitayo’s phone and gave me to call. I could not reach any of them except one man, who had been coming to the house as his brother. I could not tell him his brother is dead. Some 19 days after, we eventually met with the family members. We all went to the DSS office together and they heard the news from the DSS themselves. We were told the body had been taken to the mortuary.”

The bereaved family is accusing the DSS of torturing Eyitayo to death. The late Eyitayo’s neighbour, who was allegedly maltreated by the DSS operatives, said the victim was chained before being taken away.

The family, yesterday, asked the government to fish out the DSS operatives, who tortured Eyitayo to death. They wondered why the late Eyitayo would be chained and tortured when he did not know anything about the alleged crime. They rejected the DSS’ offer to release the body to them for burial, demanding investigation on the circumstances surrounding his death.

Mr Hassan Kareem, who spoke on behalf of the family, said: “We have been told how Damilare was chained and tortured for hours before he was taken to custody. The DSS told us that he fell down as he attempted to escape. How is it possible for somebody whose hands and legs were chained to attempt to run? We are yet to be told the truth about the death of our son. This is why the government must help us to get justice.”

Jamiu and Balogun Stanley Oyewoye were on April 20 arraigned before an Isolo Magistrates’ Court for allegedly cloning Ambode’s number.

A DSS source told *The Nation*: “At 8:23am on the fateful day, Damilare was said to have slumped in a room where he was being interrogated and was said to have been rushed to the clinic in the DSS premises. He was stabilised and allowed to rest for 45 minutes after which he was taken back to the investigation room. Several minutes after, he was rushed back to the clinic unconscious. He died at 11:50am.”

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