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Soldier for trial over Okada rider's death

Posted By: [Adebisi Onanuga](#) On: October 31, 2017 In: [Law](#)



Sergeant Taiwo Owoeye of the Nigerian Army, suspected of killing a commercial motorcyclist, also known as *Okada rider*, Abubakar Alhaji, last January 27, is to be charged with "wilful murder".

Head of the Nigerian Army legal team Bola Oyebanji disclosed this before a Presidential Investigation Panel for the Southwest.

The panel was set up by Vice President Yemi Osinbajo (SAN) to review the Armed Forces' compliance with human rights obligations and rules of engagement.

The nine-man panel, which is chaired by Justice Biobebe Georgewill, comprises Maj. Gen. Patrick Akem (rtd.); former Ekiti State Attorney-General, Mr. Olawale Fapohunda; Prof. Hauwa Ibrahim and Prof. Jibrin Ibrahim.

Others are Mrs. Ifeoma Nwakama, Mr. Abba Ambudashi Ibrahim, Mr. Adamu Jimoh Abdulkadir and Dr. Fatima Alkali.

The panel, inaugurated last August 11, sat on October 23 and 24, at the Ikeja High Court, Lagos.

Oyebanji told the panel members that the military investigated the matter and found that Owoeye had a case to answer.

Earlier while being led in evidence by a representative of the National Human Right Commission (NHRC), Mr. Lucas Koyejo, the deceased's brother, Salihu Mohammad, narrated how Alhaji died.

According to him, "the incident happened on January 27, 2017. From what I gathered, my late brother picked up a passenger on his motorcycle around Morrocco Road in Yaba.

"He parked his motorcycle behind a stationary car, not knowing that there was someone in the car. Suddenly, the car reversed, and my brother beat the boot of the car in order to notify the occupant that there was someone behind him.

“Sergeant Taiwo Owoeye angrily got down from his car and slapped my brother twice. He thereafter proceeded to kick him several times in the stomach.

“When onlookers challenged him, he said there was nothing anybody could do, even if my brother died.

“My brother thereafter became unconscious and we had to rush him to the military hospital. By that time he had started vomiting blood and other things. He could also not talk.

“Sadly, he died the next day. We reported the matter at the Panti Police Station where they declined to give us a police report.

“My brother’s body was not released to us for burial until after four months. When we inquired about the reason for the delay, we were told that the army was trying to conduct an autopsy,” Mohammed said.

Justice Georgewill advised NHRC officials to follow up on the report and ensure that justice is done.

In another development, a petition by a businessman, Okorie Onwuchekwa, alleging illegal arrest and detention, was dismissed for being out of the panel’s terms of reference.

Oyebanji said Onwuchekwa was arrested sometime in 2004 on the allegation of importing weapons to bring down a presidential plane.

According to him, Onwuchekwa was arrested for alleged treasonable felony 13 years ago and detained and tried alongside former Chief Security Officer to the late military ruler, General Sani Abacha Major Hamzat Al-Mustapha sequel to a ruling of a court of competent jurisdiction.

Upholding Oyebanji's argument which opposed hearing of Onwuchekwa's petition, the panel ruled that the issue was beyond its terms of reference.



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