

40-yr-old transporter killed during police shootout with suspected kidnappers

OPERATIVES of the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) have allegedly killed an Ogun-based transporter, Aghomofuegbe Odion, while hunting for suspected kidnappers in Ijebu-Ode area of the State.

The father of three was returning from a trip to Benin, Edo State, where he had delivered a consignment of frozen turkey when the tragic incident occurred on Thursday.

He was returning in company with his partners when they were intercepted by some vigilance men at Ijebu Ode end of the Benin-Ore highway.

According to witnesses, the vigilance men were carrying out a stop and search on vehicles on the road after some pastors of the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) were abducted by suspected kidnappers.

It was while the search for the victims was ongoing that the late Odion's vehicle ran into some local vigilance men who allegedly manhandled him and others in the vehicle.

Witnesses said Odion was shot by policemen who rushed to the scene while the late transporter was fleeing.

A witness said: "We were returning from Benin,



•The late Odion

■ **Kunle AKINRINADE** ■

when on getting to a place immediately after J4 axis of the Benin-Ore highway the vigilance men who were in mufti stopped us and order us out of the vehicle.

"They were armed with cutlass and jarred bottles. They started manhandling us unjustly. They beat us mercilessly even when we

asked them to tell us what we had done. It was when the brutality became unbearable that Odion fled and the next thing I heard were gunshots from SARS operatives, which killed Odion on the spot.

"One of the policemen ordered another officer to shoot our legs and I shouted that we only used our vehicle to convey frozen turkey to

Benin. When the the Divisional Police Officer of Oghere Division visited the scene of the incident, I described to him two of the officers attached to the squad that fired the shots that killed Odion.

"The DPO later asked that Odion's body be taken to the mortuary, while our vehicle was moved to their station. As at the time I was invited to the police station; the DPO and his men were still inside the nearby bush where Odion fell down in a pool of his blood after he was shot by the policemen."

However, Ogun police spokesman, Abimbola Oyeyemi, a Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) on Friday said the late transporter was hit by bullets when policemen engaged suspected kidnappers who abducted five pastors of the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) along the highway.

"There was a case of abduction of five pastors of RCCG who were coming to Lagos from Abia State. The man was hit by bullets when policemen engaged the kidnappers in a shootout. Even the commissioner of police and operatives are still combing the forest to free those abducted from the kidnappers."

Outrage as security men attached to