

# Protest as SARS officer kills Remo Stars captain

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***By 'Dare Odufowokan, Assistant Editor and Ernest Nwokolo, Abeokuta***

There is palpable tension in Sagamu town, Ogun State, following the alleged killing of a footballer, Tiyamiyu Kazeem, the Assistant Captain of Remo Stars Football Club, a Nigerian National League side, by policemen attached to the State Anti-Robbery on Saturday afternoon while returning home from the club's weekend training session in Abeokuta, the Ogun state capital.

Eyewitness accounts at the scene of the incident alleged that the footballer, popularly known as Kaka, was allegedly chased by the SARS operatives before he was shot.

"The SARS operative labelled him as a Yahoo boy and started chasing him. Even when people who know him intervened and told them he is a footballer, they refused to let him be.

They chased him until they shot him, wounding him fatally," an eyewitness claimed. After shooting him, the officials ran away, leaving Kazeem to his fate. He was later rushed to Fakoya Hospital, Sagamu, by sympathisers, where he was pronounced dead.

The Remo Stars Football club announced Kazeem's sudden passing away on their official Twitter handle. The Nigerian National League side stated that they are doing everything to investigate the cause of his death.

"We regret to announce the departure of our assistant captain and defender, Tiyamiyu Kazeem (Kaka). The club is doing everything possible to investigate his ultimately death. May his soul rest in perfect peace."

Angry residents took to the streets across the town to protest the murder of the footballer who many described as talented and hard working.

A close friend of the deceased, Bolaji Soluade, who spoke with our correspondent, confirmed his untimely death and blamed the SARS operatives for the incident.

According to him, one of the officers was apprehended by residents after the shooting but was rescued by other policemen before the mob could do him much harm.

Youths in Sagamu went wild with rage when the news filtered to them that the young man who was earlier in the day arrested in Sagamu alive without resistance, and taken to Abeokuta, was allegedly shot dead later by the

police halfway into their journey to Abeokuta.

It was learnt that quick intervention of senior police officers who moved in quickly to douse the tension saved Sagamu from turning into chaos.

This is coming barely 48 hours after a similar protest broke out in Abeokuta, the Ogun State capital, on Thursday following the shooting of two Hausa traders in Olomoore Market by operatives of the Anti – Cultism Unit of the Ogun State Police Command.

Condemning what it called the unbearable excesses of the SARS operatives in Sagamu, the Pan Remo Forum (PRF), an umbrella body for socio-political groups in Remoland, said the death of Kazeem was “avoidable and needless.”

In a release signed by its Organising Secretary, Lookman Banjoko, the forum called on concerned authorities to ensure that the killers of the promising footballer are fished out and punished appropriately.

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The forum also condemned what it described as the tiring excesses of the SARS officers, who it accused of always oppressing the people of the town under the pretense of fighting crime and cultism.

“This is just as we can categorically tell you that their interest lies more in the financial gratifications and exploitation they enjoy in the course of chasing Yahoo boys, real and imagined.

We call on the governor and the police commissioner to rid Sagamu of these killers in uniform before it is too late,” PRF warned.

When contacted, the Ogun State Police Public Relations Officer, Abimbola Oyeyemi, said nobody was shot dead by policemen.

He, however, confirmed the death of a young man in Sagamu who he claimed was accosted by policemen on suspicion of a crime.

According to the police spokesperson, the deceased was knocked down by an oncoming vehicle while trying to escape from the officers who arrested him.

The police spokesperson said the young man, whose identity he did not disclose, was accused of always kitting himself in full military uniform to harass and intimidate unsuspecting members of the public in Sagamu, which prompted a police inspector attached to the State Criminal Investigation and Intelligence Department (SCIID), Abeokuta, to storm Sagamu alone and effected his arrest but while he was being taken to Abeokuta, the vehicle developed fault and had to park it by the roadside.

He explained that while the faulty car was being fixed, the suspect jumped out of the car and tried to run across the road, but a speeding vehicle, unfortunately, knocked him down and he died in the process.

He also disclosed that the Commissioner of Police, Kenneth Ebrimson, had given directive for the arrest of the allegedly erring inspector for investigation to ascertain the level of unprofessionalism exhibited in his conduct

towards the victim and recommend appropriate disciplinary action.

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