



•The late Sunmonu

Police, family row over alleged plot to cover up killers of 37-year-old transporter

Our stories, by police, council chair

Was 37-year-old transporter, Olatunde Sunmonu, killed by suspected Yahoo boys allegedly related to Sagamu Local Government's Transition Committee Chairman, Gbenga Baruwa? Did the Sagamu Police Division hide the incident from the family for several days despite the latter filing a missing person complaint two days after their son's disappearance?

These are claims Ogun State Governor Dapo Abiodun, the Inspector General of Police (IG) Mohammed Adamu and Commissioner of Police (CP) Edward Ajogun will have to investigate as the family of the deceased has alleged foul play.

Olatunde, a father of four, was said to have been attacked by some boys on Sallah Day near Baruwa's house for daring to alight from his vehicle to ask them to clear their vehicles from the road for other road users to move freely.

The deceased, who until his death was a driver with one of the hauling services, was said to have left his home that evening after returning from the hospital with his sick son to meet up with a friend who needed his attention, only to meet a friend who called him on phone.

There were conflicting accounts on what happened afterwards as one claimed the friend who called him was a relative of the council boss who invited him for the chairman's party where a disagreement ensued and he was attacked.

It was alleged that Olatunde ran out of the premises afterwards as one claimed the friend who called him was a relative of the council boss who invited him for the chairman's party where a disagreement ensued and he was attacked.

But the police told the family that Olatunde was beaten up by some motorists who had caused an obstruction on the road after an accident.

Olatunde's father, Hakeem Sunmonu, said the police in Sagamu told them that the boys were involved in an accident with a woman and their vehicles blocked the road. Olatunde then alighted from his vehicle and told them to clear off the road to enable other motorists to pass, but his intervention did not go well with the boys, who promptly attacked him.

The deceased person's father, who spoke to The Nation, said he was still in shock over the circumstances surrounding the death of his son, alleging a deliberate attempt by the local police

• Precious IGBONWELUNDU •

to cover up the true situation of the matter.

Sunmonu said: "My son was killed by yahoo boys who are related to the council chairman, and there have been attempts to cover up what truly happened. We are pained because even the police deliberately withheld information when my young brother went there to report my son missing."

"They claimed there was an accident that Friday between a woman and some Yahoo boys who are related to the transition committee chairman."

"They were blocking the road and my son came down from his vehicle to tell them to clear so that other drivers would be able to pass."

"The woman entered her car and those boys attacked my son. They beat him and used something to hit him and he collapsed."

"They said they called the police and policemen from Sagamu Division came to the scene and took my son to the hospital."

"They also arrested the two men but those boys attacked my son. They beat him and used something to hit him and he collapsed."

"The police also towed his vehicle to the division."

"He was first taken to a private hospital from where they moved him to Babcock University Hospital where he died and his body was kept in the mortuary."

"They said he died two days later. My question is how come the police did not search the vehicle they towed from the road to their station since they knew the driver was unconscious? Couldn't they have got his identity from his particulars in order to contact his family?"

"Another issue is that when they called me that my son did not return home on Friday and that he was not present at the ram slaughtering for his grandparents, I started calling all the people who might know his whereabouts but no one claimed to have seen him."

"When he had not been seen at the end of Saturday, I told my younger brother,

Dejola Awosanya, to go to the Sagamu Police Station to report him missing."

"Note that this was on Sunday and the said accident happened on Friday. Since, the police knew that they had an assault victim who was unconscious and drove similar car as reported by my family, were they not supposed to have told us about it?"

"When they asked my family members to go and bring a picture of my son and they did, couldn't they identify him in that picture as the same person they



rushed to the hospital?

"It was not until August 4, that the police called my brother, Dejola Awosanya, to break the news of my son's death."

"The DPO showed the family Tunde's driver's licence and vehicle particulars and Tunde's picture in the morgue. He told the family that Tunde's vehicle was towed to the station because they couldn't find the key."

"We want to know why there was delay for at least two days without the police informing the family. Why did the police tag Tunde an unidentified person when they had all the information about him, including his driver's licence and vehicle particulars taken from his vehicle?"

"Why were his two phones taken and later returned by one of the culprits that ran away when the vigilante got there?"

"Why did the DPO release only one phone to the family? Why was the local government chairman, Mr Banjo Baruwa, in a hurry to secure the culprit's bail?"

"Tunde Sunmonu was the first son of Hakeem Sunmonu and the only child of Yetunde Ajose-Akano. Please help us get justice, because my son cannot die like that. His death should spell an end to incessant killings by yahoo boys in Sagamu," he lamented.

Suspects not my relations—Council chair

Baruwa, however, denied claims that the suspects were his wife's relatives, adding that he only went to the DPO to verify the incident when he was told about it.

"All your information is incorrect," he said in a text message to our correspondent. "The boys are not my wife's relations."

"As the chief security officer, they informed me about it and I went to the DPO to verify. The DPO told me the man was taken to the hospital and I went to see him."

"The next day, I was told that the man was deceased."

The spokesman for the Ogun State

Police Command, Abimbola Oyeyemi, said it is not true that the police attempted a cover-up, adding that the attacker and two others who had the deceased's phone were in the custody of the Homicide Unit, State Criminal Investigation Department (SCID), Elewera.

He said the police could not have contacted the family since they did not know who he was until the DPO sighted his picture and realised that it was the same man whose corpse he had seen at the University Hospital.

Oyeyemi said: "There is nothing like a cover-up in this matter. Also, the council chairman did nothing wrong. Every qualified Nigerian is at liberty to seek the bail of a detainee. It is left for the police officer in charge to weigh the gravity of the offence or issue and consider whether bail will be granted."

"In this instance, the DPO saw that the victim was lying critical in the hospital and denied bail. The chairman never went back to demand bail for the suspect and the DPO transferred the case to homicide as soon as he confirmed the victim was dead."

"The police did not know any relation of the victim. He was taken to the hospital as an unknown person, because the focus was to save him."

"The private hospital he was taken to said he should be moved to Babcock University Hospital for CT scan, but he died there. DPO went there, took the picture of the body and moved it to the mortuary."

"The following day, someone came to make an entry of a missing person. They were asked to bring picture, and when the DPO saw the picture, it turned out to be the same person. It was then they went to his vehicle, searched and saw his driver's licence. They recovered his phone from two other suspects."

As of Sunday, police did not know who they were reporting missing. The case has been transferred to the Homicide Section."

