

# My newborn baby was killed in Police chase, woman tells Lagos panel

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***By Robert Egbe***

A woman, Chimbusomma Uligwe, yesterday accused policemen attached to the Lekki Concession Company (LCC) of causing her baby's death.

Mrs. Uligwe told the Lagos State Judicial Panel of Enquiry and Restitution for Victims of SARS related abuses and the Lekki Toll Gate incident that the incident happened on July 9, 2019, while the

policemen in an LCC van chased a commercial bus.

She said the baby was her first child, after eight years of marriage. She got married in 2010.

Uligwe said: "On July 9, 2019, at about 4:30 pm, I was coming from the bank where I went to pay money when I came out of the bank, I was at the bus stop carrying my baby, only for us to see a bus chased by LCC police van.

Mrs. Uligwe said she and other commuters were at the lay-by on the road waiting for a bus.

According to her, a police officer and two men wearing LCC apron were seated in the van.

She added: "The next thing was the bus hit me and my daughter, pushing us to the road before the driver could stop. The conductor ran away. My baby landed on the floor.

"I was already on the floor too. For me to carry my baby, my baby's head was broken."

Her baby died on the spot, but the LCC bus, unaware of what had happened, blocked the bus and the police officer at the back jumped off. Upon seeing the baby's broken head, he tried to run and was caught by people nearby, close to a Zenith Bank branch.

"The policeman said he didn't know anything about it, and I said 'but you jumped out of this LCC bus.' He was just saying different things," she said.

She identified the man as Inspector Jonah Jatto.

Following Jatto's arrest, her lawyer's letters to the LCC, and the Police Force were ignored, the petitioner claimed.

To support her claim, Uligwe tendered photographs of her child with a broken head, photographs of a white Hilux, with registration number A 333584 XX, certificates of birth and death of her daughter and other documents to the panel.

During cross-examination, Police counsel Joseph Eboseremen asked whether Jatto was the driver of the bus that hit her and the baby.

The petitioner replied that the driver of the bus fled the scene immediately after the incident happened, but the police officer alighted from the van chasing the bus.

The LCC's counsel, Rotimi Seriki, also sought to know whether she had any documents to prove that the police officer was attached to the LCC.

According to him, Mrs. Uligwe's lawyer wrote to them and demanded N200 million as compensation within five days, else, they would go to court.

He added that the driver of the bus was apprehended and charged to court.

Meanwhile, one of the two youth representatives on the nine-member Lagos State Judicial Panel of Inquiry probing police brutality and the alleged shooting of #EndSARS protesters by soldiers at the Lekki Toll Gate last October, Miss Rinuola Oduala, yesterday withdrew from the panel.

Oduala disclosed her decision in a post on her Twitter handle titled, 'Let's stay the course of justice, partial wins are not enough'.

She said her decision followed, among others, the panel's willingness to serve the course of justice for victims of the Lekki shootings of last October 20, in the wake of the planned reopening of the Lekki toll gate.

In a five against four split decision last Saturday, the panel returned the tollgate to its operators, Lekki Concession Company (LCC), after forensic experts submitted their report on the October 20, 2020 incident.

Oduala and three others opposed the panel's majority decision led by chairman Judge emeritus Doris Okuwobi, and four other members that upheld the LCC's request to repossess the facility.

Subsequently, hashtags such as #OccupyLekkiTollgate and counter hashtags such as #DefendLagos and #DemNoBornYourPapaWell trended online, with both calling for protests at the Lekki Toll Gate plaza today, a development criticised and by the Federal Government, the Lagos State Government and the Nigeria Police Force, who warned protesters to keep away.

Explaining her reasons for withdrawal, Oduala said, "My stand on the reopening on the toll gate is clear; the state government and the private organisation operating the toll have not been cleared of collusion with elements allegedly deployed by the federal govt to target citizens on home soil during a time of peace, without provocation.

"Justice has not been served, and as a representative of the Nigerian citizenry, my only recourse is to stay the course of justice.

“On 6th February 2021, we were ambushed with votes to reopen the toll gates. I participated because I do not believe in silence. It is clear where my loyalties lie.

“But at the end of the day, parties on the panel voted to reopen the toll, citing lost jobs as more important than justice for lost lives through a proceeding that didn’t form a proper quorum without the reps who represent the youth constituency that birthed the idea of the panel, and on whose mandates the panels were set up.

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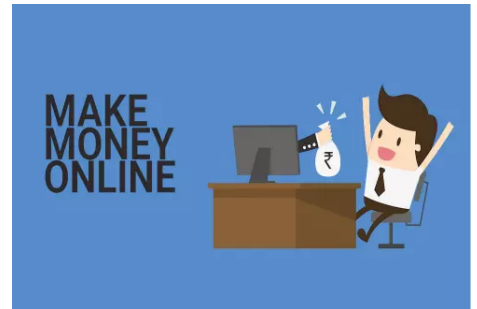
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