

Tension in Sokoto as polytechnic student hacks roommate to death

- School shut as students protest
- Deceased buried without autopsy
- Relatives alleged cover-up

■ Dare **ODUFOWOKAN**, Assistant Editor ■

TRAGEDY struck in the Umaru Ali Shinkafi Polytechnic, Sokoto, Sokoto State as a second year National Diploma (ND) student of the institution, Miss Zainab Bisola Owoade, was allegedly stabbed to death by her course mate and roommate. The suspect, Nafessat Yekini, reportedly ended the life of Owoade untimely by stabbing her with a knife during an argument in their hostel. The deceased was in the Public Administration Department of the institution until her death.

According to eyewitness accounts, Owoade was rushed to a nearby hospital after she was stabbed. She was however pronounced dead on arrival at the hospital. She was stabbed while fighting with her roommate. She didn't immediately seek medical help after the stabbing as the two continued their disagreement while Owoade was bleeding.

"She had lost too much blood before she was rushed to the hospital.

"Some people claimed she slumped while still fighting and was whisked to the hospital while others said she was forced to the hospital because of the quantity of blood she lost.

"But at the end of the day, she didn't survive the injury. She was declared dead on arrival by the doctor. The police was informed immediately and they came to take her body away," a source said.

There was palpable tension in the town following the killing last Wednesday. According to reliable sources, the deceased, an active student union member in the institution,

allegedly died from injuries sustained after she was stabbed on the chest by another female student of the institution during a face-off at their hostel.

"Our school was shut on Wednesday as students were angrily protesting what they described as the shady handling of the incident by the police and the school authority.

"The deceased has been buried without an autopsy and we heard that the suspect has been released. There is an attempt to change the narratives of what happened and that is what we are against," Aliu Kareem, a student unionist who is also an official of the school's chapter of Federation of Oyo Students Union, told *The Nation*.

Investigation by *The Nation* further revealed that the deceased and the suspect were bosom friends and are both from the same hometown.

"The two of them are not just from the same Oyo State, they are also from Kishi town. In fact, the late Owoade is a princess of the town. We are still unable to unravel what led to such a fight that resulted in the death of one of them. It is baffling and we find the act a very cruel one," Aliu added.

Our correspondent also gathered that the decision to bury the late Owoade at a Muslim cemetery on Wednesday has ignited fresh protests among students and other residents of Sokoto, especially Oyo State indigenes.

According to feelers across town, the police



•Yekini, the suspect



•The late Owoade

appear to be bowing to pressure from some quarters to cover up the incident and prevent the law from taking its full course.

"I can confirm to you that no autopsy was conducted on the remains of the deceased. We are surprised to hear that relatives of the deceased asked that she should be hurriedly buried according to Islamic injunction. This is not true.

"I can tell you that relatives of Owoade are still on their way coming to Sokoto from Kishi. It is the relatives of Yekini, who are based here in Sokoto that are pulling strings to ensure she evades justice," a source claimed.

When contacted about the incident, the Police Public Relations Officer of the Sokoto State Police Command, Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) Sa'usi, confirmed the incident while promising to make more enquiries for relevant facts and get back to our correspondent as soon as possible.

But a reliable source within the command, who sought anonymity, confirmed some of the alleged development while debunking claims that the police is trying to cover up the matter in any way.

"It is true that a student of the polytechnic was stabbed to death by another student. Yes,

the dead student has been buried but the suspect has not been released as alleged. I can tell you that she is now with us at the police headquarters here in Sokoto.

"I cannot say whether an autopsy was done on the corpse before burial, but I can confirm to you that it is the parents of the deceased that ordered that she be buried immediately.

"From what we gathered, the two girls are from the same hometown in Oyo State and the two families have settled the matter back home. That is why she was buried while investigation into the matter continued.

"The police have no interest in the matter other than to ensure justice and peace. I even learnt the suspect's father was detained too. So, we have not done anything outside the law on the matter," he said.

The Nation gathered that relatives of the deceased are displeased with moves to get the suspects released from police custody, following the burial of Owoade. According to a family source, "the parents of the suspect are going all over the place pleading for the release of their own daughter. It is not true that our family agreed to any settlement. As far as we are concerned, this is a case between the suspect and the government."