

'I signed statement that I killed LASTMA official under duress'

By Adebisi Onanuga

A DRIVER, Elijah Shokoya accused of the involuntary manslaughter of Mr Olawale Ak-inmade, an official of the Lagos Traffic Management Authority (LASTMA) yesterday told an Ikeja High Court that he was beaten up by policemen and forced to sign a statement admitting that he killed the traffic management official.

Shokoya made the allegations during a trial-within-trial to determine whether or not his statement was obtained under duress.

The defendant is charged with involuntary manslaughter before Justice Oyindamola Ogala.

Led in evidence by defence counsel, Mrs Abiodun Kolawole, Shokoya said he gave

the police his statement on January 27, the second day after his arrest, saying he was taken to a room and asked to write his statement but that he told them he could not write in English.

"They said I was lying and they slapped me and the Investigating Police Officer (IPO) started writing something.

"I did not understand what she was writing. The other police officer used a stick to hit me on the hand and while the IPO was writing, she was beating me.

"When she finished writing, she asked me to sign what she wrote and I told her I did not understand what she wrote and I refused to sign it."