

Police confirm missing BRT passenger dead

• Driver paraded • Family seeks justice

THE Lagos State Police Command has confirmed that Miss Oluwabamise Ayanwole, 22, who went missing after boarding a Bus Rapid Transport (BRT) vehicle on February 26, is dead.

Oluwabamise boarded the bus at Chevron Bus Stop, Lekki, en route Oshodi around 7pm.

Her disappearance raised concerns, with her friends saying that she expressed fear over the conduct of the driver.

The police arrested guarantors of the BRT driver, who fled as Bamise was declared missing.

It was learnt that detectives went to the last known address of the suspect, said to be from Ekiti State, but were told that he moved out about a year ago.

Bamise's whereabouts were finally unraveled by residents around Ebute Ero in Lagos Island, who said that she was tossed out of a BRT bus half-naked and with her private parts missing.

Twitter user, Akinwunmi King, said Bamise's brother was at Ebute Ero Police Station where he was shown a picture of the body and he confirmed it was that of his sister.

He also shared a screenshot of messages he received which seemed to indicate that Bamise's private parts were harvested inside the BRT bus before she was tossed out.

The sender claimed her body was seen in their area, Ebute Ero, adding that some witnesses saw when she was thrown off the bus.

"They saw the bus drive away and an SUV following it, according to people to whom she was shouting for help, before she gave up. People around reported the case at Ebute Ero Police station," the message said.

Police spokesman Adekunle Ajisebutu said Bamise's body was found on Carter Bridge by Ogogoro commu-

nity in Lagos Island.

"The body has been deposited at the morgue of Mainland Hospital, Yaba, for autopsy. The bereaved family has been contacted and family members have identified the body as that of Oluwabamise Ayanwole, the lady earlier declared missing.

"The Commissioner of Police, Abiodun Alabi, is saddened by this incident and, therefore, expresses, on behalf of the management, officers and men of the command, his heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family," he said.

Ajisebutu confirmed yesterday that the BRT driver, identified as Nice Andrew Omininikoron, had been arrested.

Omininikoron, 47, was arrested at his hiding place at Ososa, Ogun State by operatives of the Department of State Services (DSS), CP Alabi said last night.

Omininikoron, who was arrested alongside the owner of the house he fled to, was paraded yesterday before reporters at the Police Command, Ikeja.

The Nation learnt that Omininikoron denied having any hand in Bamise's murder, claiming that his bus was hijacked by three armed men who threatened him with a gun to cooperate or be killed.

Asked why he fled instead of reporting to the police or his employer, the driver was said to have kept mum.

Addressing reporters on the incident, Alabi said the police and DSS trailed him to his hideout and were closing in on him before his eventual arrest.

He debunked claims that Bamise's private parts were harvested.

The CP said he visited the mortuary where a relative of

the deceased confirmed that she was intact.

Asked if Oluwabamise was raped by her killers, the police boss said that would be ascertained by autopsy. He also dismissed allegations of attempted cover-up.

Alabi said: "We are saddened by the death of Oluwabamise Ayanwole, the 22-year-old lady who was abducted while travelling in a BRT bus from Chevron area, Lekki to Osodi on 26th February, 2022.

"As soon as the report was received by the police, detectives were dispatched and search parties organised to trace the whereabouts of the missing lady. We were also in synergy with other relevant strategic partners with the determination and strength within our capacity to unravel the circumstances surrounding the disappearance of the innocent, promising young lady.

"As the suspect is being paraded today, we want to assure the public and indeed the bereaved family of the victim that justice will be served in this case.

"We want to reassure the public that the suspect will be arraigned in court very soon to face justice."

Meanwhile, the family of the late 22-year-old fashion designer has called on the government to ensure that her killers are brought to justice.

In an interview with *The Nation* yesterday, Bamise's sister, Elizabeth Ayanwola, who wept profusely, said, "We want justice for my sister. This is not sad; it is wicked, we want Justice."

Also, Bamise's mother, 72-year-old Comfort Ayanwola, a mother of five boys and five girls, said she has been seriously disturbed since her daughter went missing.

Another relative who spoke with *The Nation* called on the



• The suspect

Lagos State government and the police to treat the case with seriousness, and punish those involved in the barbaric act.

The relative said Bamise's father has also been crying since the daughter's disappearance, adding that visitors have been trooping in out of their house to condole with the family.

A wide range of Lagosians on social media urged Governor Sanwo-Olu to ensure justice is served.

@Sardney wrote: "Bamise deserves to live, all she wanted was to cater for herself and family. The state public transport is meant to be the safest form in any working community, sadly reverse is the case."

@TunnyKvng said: "Bamise took the necessary precautions. She entered a relatively 'safe' BRT bus, called friends, took pictures and videos and yet she was killed in cold blood. Nigeria failed her. RIP Bamise."

Soldier shot in Lagos dies