

Army paid N150,000 for killing my child, claims mother of lady shot by soldier in Port Harcourt

- Family alleges cover-up by military bigwig

By Shola O'Neil, S'South Regional Ed... On Nov 19, 2022



• Damiete on sickbed before her death

The prayer of every parent is to be buried by their children after their death in old age. A mother or father presiding over the burial of her child is never part of the script, and in some cultures, parents are not allowed to witness the burial rites of their children, because it is an anomaly.

Sadly, this is the fate that has befallen 65-year-old widow, Madam Koteibofori Harry, the mother of 24-year-old Damiete Green, who was gruesomely gunned by a trigger-happy soldier in Port Harcourt just weeks before she turned 25.

In what the family deemed insult on injury, the military high command at the 6th Division of the Nigerian Army, from where the killer soldier was deployed, offered the bereaved family N150,000 (One Hundred and Fifty Thousand Naira) as compensation.

The bereft mother told *The Nation* that the gesture was an insult. “They see us as nobody, so to them, my daughter is worth less than a ram.”

Our reporter recalled that the deceased was shot by a Sgt. Yinka Ayileka, a trigger-happy soldier deployed to the Nigeria Correctional Centre, in broad daylight in Port Harcourt on Tuesday, September 6, 2022.

Her mother, who visited our office in Port Harcourt on Thursday, explained that Damiete was running errands for her when she met her untimely death that came through the soldier’s reckless bullet.

Ayileka was allegedly on an illegal roadblock close to the prison, where he was deployed as a part of security reinforcement in the wake of attacks on prisons nationwide by terrorist groups.

Like most military and other security officials deployed to the Niger Delta region, Sgt Ayileka, with the support of his superiors, extended his assignment to Harbour Road (opposite Rachael Hotel), a route where illegal bunkers operate.

The conveyors of the stolen products usually pay ‘taxes’ between N500 to N1,000 on kegs to the soldiers.

An eyewitness said trouble started when a Toyota Camry (number BNY 585 EA) zoomed off without ‘settling’ the soldier. In a fit of rage, Sgt Ayileka gave a hot chase and jumped on the car booth.

“When the car still refused to stop, he started shooting indiscriminately. There were several vehicles trapped in the gridlock caused by the checkpoint and the victim was inside a Lexus 330 car marked ABC 26 GC,” one eyewitness said.

The driver, Emmanuel Oluwaseun, said Ms Green lived in his neighbourhood, adding that he offered her lift just minutes before the incident.

He said: “I saw her waiting for a cab, and I gave her and her friend a lift. We had only driven a few metres when the commotion started.

“As I was trying to get off the road, she shouted, ‘Dem don shoot me (they have shot me)’. She was in the back seat, and later we found that the bullet went through the back and hit her.

“She was taken to Braithwaite Memorial Hospital, from where she was referred to the University of Port Harcourt Teaching Hospital. She was in the hospital for 12 days before she was confirmed dead.”

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Oluwaseun’s car is also in a game of Ping-Pong by the police, who have refused to release it.

He said: “When I went to the police, they said my fate was in the hands of the soldier; then I went to the barrack they said they know nothing about it.”

Meanwhile, our investigations revealed that Ms Green might have died from lack of proper medical care. In her last interview with our reporter on September 9, the deceased was concerned that her life was ebbing out because of a lack of medical care.

“They have only given me injections (since she was admitted). They said they want to take me to the theatre, but they have not taken me there since.

“For two days now I have not eaten anything or drank water. I have been waiting but no response,” she said in a weak voice that told her state.

She died nine days later at the UPTH.

‘My daughter is worth N150,000 to Nigeria’

Her grief-stricken mother, in an exclusive chat with the reporter on Thursday evening, lamented the death of her favourite daughter and last born.

Weeping profusely, she decried the injustice and impunity of her daughter’s killer.

“I have three children, three daughters, and she was my last born.”

Hinting at a foul player, she said the Commandant at 6 Division; the investigating military police officer, one Loku Mohammed, and the base admin officer, Capt. Dyadya had promised her that the matter would be investigated and the culprit brought to justice.

“Now I see that they are protecting him because they see us as helpless and inconsequential members of society.

“Till today, they have not shown me the man who killed my daughter. They hoped that if they continue to toss us around we would get tired and forget it.

“They said he would be charged to court, but they did not. Even if I don’t have anything to do to him, at least I should see the person responsible for my pains, yet they denied me that.

“He is walking about freely. He was not even detained for one hour. Is there no justice for the poor in our country?

“I want help. I want justice. Nigerians should not allow my daughter to die in vain,” she added.

Speaking in the same vein, the deceased older sister, Preye, decried the perceived kid-glove treatment of the alleged killer. She said the military engaged in hide-and-seek with them until they got fed up

“After waiting we called them (military) and told the Commandant (6th Division) that we would not continue to leave her remains in the morgue.

“We asked that they should let us lay her to rest. The commandant then asked us to come to his office at Bori Camp.

“We went on the 8th of November to see him. He gave Capt Dyadya N150,000 to transfer to me,” she said amidst sobs.

The Army Public Relations Officer, 6 Division, **Nigerian Army**, Major Ike Iweha, who was contacted on Thursday after the interview with Madam Harry, said he was in Asaba, Delta State. He promised to revert to our reporter when he returned to PHC yesterday, but he had not done so at press time on Saturday.

Major Iweha had also assured that Damiete would get the best medical attention before her death. He made the pledge when our reporter contacted him after the incident on September 9. Sadly, the family said they did not receive any assistance for treatment until her death.

The family said they raised money by every means to ensure that the victim survived the ordeal.

“We have receipt of some of our expenses up to N400,000 that we managed to raise, but they allowed her to die. They did not come, instead, they waited until she died and we went to the barrack to report to them.

“When we told the Commandant about what happened, he said he was also aware. He apologised and said it was a painful thing that he would not want such to happen to him,” Preye said

She accused the police and the military of conniving to shield Sgt Ayileka from justice.

They were particularly perturbed by the failure of officers at Central Police Division, Town, where the incident was reported, to do anything about it.

“If there was no connivance, why was Ayileka not arrested when he went to make a statement and what has happened to the statement he made? We heard that the soldier walked out just within minutes after he was taken to the station.”

The remains of Damiete Green are slated for internment next Saturday, 26 November. It is not clear though if the family would get the justice they seek.