



City & crime



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Three soldiers held for 'killing' driver, vehicle theft

THREE soldiers attached to the 9th Brigade Nigerian Army, Lagos, have been arrested for allegedly shooting a driver to death and snatching a brand new vehicle he was to deliver in Abuja.

The suspects whose identities were unknown, were arrested on Friday after a friend to the deceased driver identified them.

It was gathered that the soldiers had mounted an illegal road block at Ojodu Berger on the outward Lagos flank, on Thursday night, where they allegedly targeted new vehicles to be stolen.

Unknown to them, the latest victim identified as Lawal, who drove a brand new 2022 Toyota Corolla, was embarking on the trip with his friend who rode in a Toyota Hilux and was ahead.

A source who hinted about the incident, told *The Nation* that the soldiers first stopped the Hilux van and after the driver wound down, identified himself; they asked him to move on.

The soldiers subsequently stopped Lawal, who was driving behind the Hilux, parked him and after a few minutes,

• Army, police begin probe

By Precious Igbonwelundu

told him they were taking him to their barracks at Iyana Ipaja.

"His friend who was in front after waiting for a while without seeing Lawal from his mirror, called his phone and he told him that the soldiers said they were taking him to their barracks at Iyana Ipaja.

"So, he decided to turn back and follow them from a distance. It was his friend who saw how they shot him with their service rifle and threw his body in a bush. They then fled with the vehicle with the hope to go and sell it.

"The friend was the one who reported to the police immediately and the soldiers were trailed. It was discovered that they were from the 9th Brigade. So, with the help of the Lagos State Commissioner of Police, the friend went to the Commander 9th Brigade and all the soldiers there were lined up for identification.

"Lawal's friend physically identified the three who were involved in that callous murder. They were immediately detained," said the source who pleaded anonymity.

It was gathered that the latest incident was not the first the rogue soldiers had committed such crimes. They were alleged to have been the same people who murdered a Senator's aide penultimate weekend and stole his vehicle which they allegedly sold.

The Nation gathered that police investigation revealed that the aide was not assassinated as speculated but was killed by the soldiers simply because he was driving a clean vehicle.

"They have been doing this thing. This is not the time first. Even the aide to the Senator that was murdered two weekends ago was by soldiers who mounted an illegal checkpoint. He was killed because he was driving a clean vehicle and they stole the vehicle.

"They have also been kidnapping people. Some people are fortunate that they collect money and release them while they kill others recklessly. Most of these cases I mentioned, they also used their service rifles to carry them out," he added.

Meanwhile, an SOS message

which syndicated across social media platforms on Saturday night, called for justice for Lawal, urging people to share the information until it got to the Chief of Army Staff (COAS), Lt.-Gen. Taoreed Lagbaja.

The message read: "This is to inform the general public about a very tragic incident that happened on Friday 18th of August 2023.

"Lawal is driver that was on his way to deliver a brand new 2022 Toyota Corolla to Abuja from Lagos, on getting to Ojodu Berger outward Lagos, he was stopped at a military checkpoint, thereafter the soldiers lured him that they were taking him to their Barracks, and then they took him as far as Iyana-Ipaja tollgate axis, killed him and threw his body in the bush, then made away with the vehicle.

"The Lagos State Police command led by CP Idowu Owunhunwa is doing a great job with the help of an eyewitness and has been able to identify three of the soldiers involved in this gruesome murder,

"We're appealing to the Army not to cover up this crime and allow the police to do their job as to ensure Lawal



• The 'stolen car'

gets Justice.

"Please keep sharing till it gets to the Chief of Army Staff."

Contacted for reaction, spokesman for the Police Command, SP Benjamin Hundeyin

confirmed the murder, adding that the Army was currently investigating the case in collaboration with the police.

Hundeyin declined further comments on the issue.

Two robbery suspects nabbed in Ogun