



city&crime

Lion kills handler at Obasanjo Presidential Library zoo

THE Ogun State Police Command yesterday said a 35-year-old zoo worker at Olusegun Obasanjo Presidential Library (OOPL), Abeokuta, Babaji Daule, was killed by lion in his care.

The horrifying incident happened the previous day in the barely a decade old zoo.

This happened seven months after a similar incident in February, this year, when a nine-year-old lion at the Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), Ile-Ife, Osun State zoo killed its handler during feeding.

The victim, Olabode Olawuyi, a Veterinary Technologist, was said to have been in charge of the institution's zoological garden for more than 10 years.

The spokesman for the Ogun State Police Command, Superintendent of Police, Omolola

From Ernest Nwokolo, Abeokuta and Joseph Eshanokpe

Odutola, said the OOPL zoo victim was an indigene of Bauchi State.

The victim, Omolola added, was said to be a lion handler, and that the big cat attacked him while trying to feed it, seizing him by the neck and inflicting grave injuries, resulting in his death afterwards.

It was learnt that he forgot to secure the locks and barricade the lion's house before approaching the cage to feed the animal. The remains of the zoo worker have been evacuated to the morgue to Ijaiye General Hospital, while the wild lion was sent to sleep through shooting to let go its grip on the handler.

The police spokesperson said:

"A deadly incident involving a wild animal attack has been reported by the Area Commander Metro on September 28, 2024, about 7:40 hours by the Chief Security Officer of Olusegun Obasanjo Presidential Library, who informed the Divisional Police Officer that a 35-year-old man named Babaji Daule from Bauchi State, who is a trained handler of a male lion at the Zoological Garden in OOPL Abeokuta, tragically lost his life.

"It was discovered that the lion handler carelessly neglected to secure the locks and barricade the lion's enclosure before approaching the cage to feed the animal.

"This negligence allowed the lion to escape and attack the handler, resulting in fatal injuries to the handler's neck and eventual death."

Also, the park's management in a statement said the incident occurred when some guests arrived after the park's closing hour.

And deferring to them, the zookeeper agreed to feed the lion in its inner enclosure and met his end.

"The zookeeper, feeling comfortable with the animal, left the safety gate open and proceeded to feed the lion. He was attacked and killed on the spot.

"To prevent further mutilation of the body, the animal was put down immediately by personnel of the park.

"It is important to state that this activity fell completely outside the standard feeding routine of the park.

"Investigations have begun, and the matter has since been reported to the police for their investigation."