

When NURTW, NASFAT returned money found on accident victim

Recently, a motor accident claimed more than 12 people around Alapako area, Lagos/Ibadan Expressway. TUNDE OGUNESAN reports how members of the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) ensured that the money on one of the victims was returned to his people.



Chairman, National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW), Ibadan South-East Inter-State, Alhaji Muritala Gasau (third left), presenting the cash to the chairman, NASFAT, Ring Road, Ibadan, Alhaji Tawakalitu Samsodeen (fourth left), while the secretary of the union, Mr Felix Oluwabunmi Iyiola and others watch.

FRIDAY, July 13, 2015 will remain a sad day in the memory of members of the Plastic Sellers Association, Alesinloye Market, Ibadan and the NASFAT family of Ring road, Ibadan.

Sulaiman Wahab, popularly referred to as Alfa Papillon, and many others, who perished in the unfortunate incident, set out on their different missions early on the fateful Friday, but ended up where they never prepared for.

Around Alapako area on the Lagos/Ibadan Expressway, an unconfirmed report stated, two trailers which had a head-on collision were on the road, with a bonfire set up to alert oncoming vehicles to their dangerous presence. This was as a result of the ongoing rehabilitation of the expressway.

Sunday Tribune gathered that two buses coming from Ibadan axis to Lagos rammed into the stationed trailer coming from Ibadan axis. All the passengers in the first bus conveying Wahab died on the spot. The second bus, which had trailed the first bus bumper to bumper also hit the first bus. All the people in the first bus died while four people, including the driver, lost their lives in the second bus. Others, who were in critical condition, were taken to the hospital.

Wahab was among the three people who sat in the front of the first bus.

Business people, who go on journeys of that nature, usually collect money from their colleagues in the market. So, on this fateful day, Wahab was in possession of about a million naira. Luckily, friends, business colleagues and members of NASFAT, took immediate steps to ensure the family he left behind did not inherit a bad debt. At that point, nobody actually knew the amount he had on him on the trip. So, they had two options, to contact the

transporters where he "usually" boarded en route Lagos.

The first option was to make announcements at the market square to inform whoever sent Wahab to help them get things in Lagos to come out and state the exact amount they gave him. And that step happened to be the breakthrough. It was gathered that those who came out gave the committee a hint on the amount that was likely to be on him on that trip.

Again, on their way from the morgue where they went to recover his body for burial, they stopped over at Lagos motor park at Challenge, in Ibadan, with the corpse, to enquire if the union (NURTW) had any link with the rescue team immediately the accident occurred. It took the team some time because the driver of the vehicle also died in the accident.

After some time, some members of the NURTW came to their rescue and informed them that they would only release the money found on the deceased based on the consent of their union at the local government level, to avert controversy.

Thereafter, the two camps met at the newly-constructed Ajimobi Motor Park, New Garage, Ibadan. The NURTW delegation was led by the chairman of the union in Ibadan South-East Inter state, Alhaji Muritala Gasau, while chairman of NASFAT, Ring Road branch, Ibadan, Alhaji Tawaliu Samsondeen and some members of his union with representatives of the deceased's business colleagues at Alesinloye market constituted the other team.

The groups held meetings and resolved their differences on the accident, while also agreeing that nobody was accusing the other, but that there was the need to make clarifications.

At last, Alhaji Gasau disclosed to the deceased's friends

and business associates that N316,000 (three hundred and sixteen thousand naira) was found on Wahab.

The disclosure immediately doused tension. *Sunday Tribune* gathered that the figure announced tallied with what was collated by the deceased's business associates.

Addressing *Sunday Tribune* after the meeting, Gasau said it was unfortunate that the incident claimed so many lives. He urged the families affected to take heart, as the incident was not anybody's wish.

According to him, "I am using this opportunity to appeal to you over our loved ones that we lost in the accident around Alapako area, last Friday. Such was never our wish as transporters, but are we to question Almighty Allah? Man proposes, God disposes, they say. I know it will surprise you to know that the driver of that vehicle, which your person boarded, was planning a *Wolimat* programme for his son, but Allah wanted it that way.

"Let me also inform you that the money found on Alfa Sulaiman Wahab was N316,000, which we believe should be returned to the rightful owner or next of kin. At this point, I wish to state that the RAMA manifest that we used to beg our passengers to fill enabled us to discover the next of kin of the deceased, and that helped us to return what does not belong to us to the owner.

"This is what our chairman, Alhaji Taofeek Oyerinde (aka Fele), has been preaching. That anything found in our vehicles, whether in circumstances like this or the passengers left it in our vehicles, should be returned to the rightful owner. In this case, I am using this opportunity again to appeal to our people to always board at the motor park. We're able to make this happen because Alhaji Wahab boarded the bus from the park, otherwise, the story would have been different. I pray that God will give their families the fortitude to bear the loss."