

# Police arrest man, 60, one other over murder of 10-year-old girl in Ibadan

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**Danjuma**

TWO people are currently helping the Oyo State Police Command over the circumstances that led to the death of a 10-year-old girl, Ope (surname withheld).

Her corpse was found in a soak-away a day after she was declared missing on January 6, 2017, at Mosoke area between Ajibode and Apete communities in Ibadan, the state capital.

The prime suspect is Nuru Danjuma (aka) Baba l'Oyo, a 60-year-old neighbourhood menial worker, who is also a close friend of Ope's father.

According to sources, the deceased's father and the suspect usually patronised together a dealer in herbal concoction.

The mutual relationship reportedly between the two men snowballed into Ope's affinity with her father's friend, who often sent her on errand whenever he was engaged for a menial job in the neighbourhood.

However, the unexpected happened on January 6, when Ope became missing and a search party with Baba L'Oyo as a member set up to look for her combed the whole neighbourhood to no avail.

The second suspect, Alfa Abdulai Muritala, however, came into the frame, when the corpse of the girl was found in a soak-away near his house.

Muritala went to the police station at Ojoo, Ibadan to lodge a formal complaint but was referred to the Apete Police Station, where the officers quickly swung into action.

According to investigations by the police, Ope was sighted allegedly with Baba l'Oyo on the day she disappeared, as she said to have helped him with some menial work at a house where the suspect worked that day.

Besides, the owner of the house simply identified as Alhaja allegedly confirmed to the police that she saw Ope with Baba l'Oyo a day before she was declared missing.

Again, it was discovered that in the evening of the same day, Baba l'Oyo allegedly sent Ope to buy a bottle of soft drink and biscuit for him, a claim which was confirmed by the deceased's elder sister and the woman who sold the soft drink and biscuit.

According to the police investigation, when the trader asked Ope who sent her on the errand, she claimed it was Baba l'Oyo.

As she was taking the items to Baba l'Oyo, the deceased met her elder sister, claiming the prime suspect that sent her on the errand.

"It was after this that the little girl was discovered to have gone missing, with Baba l'Oyo denying completely that she sent her on errand that day," the police alleged.

Speaking with Crime Reports at the State Criminal Investigation Department (SCID), Iyaganku, Ibadan, where the case was being handled, Baba l'Oyo, however, denied sending Ope on the errand, claiming whoever held a contrary view was only out to frame him up.

Baba l'Oyo, who had been separated from his wife after having a child for him, claimed he neither had anything to do with the disappearance or death of Ope.

He also told Crime Reports that since his separation with his wife, he used to patronise commercial sex workers at Mokola and Kara-Bodija areas of Ibadan to satisfy sexual urge.

He also claimed that he used to take alcoholic drinks and smoke cigarettes.

However, the second suspect, Alfa Muritala, a 39-year-old Islamic teacher, claimed he was on his way to somewhere on that Saturday morning, when some people came to seek permission to scoop the water that drained into his soak-away.

"I've not started using the soak-away, but water drains into it, and people who need it to mix cement or sand come to obtain my approval to scoop water from the soak-away. So on that Saturday morning, I gave permission to the person that came for that purpose, only for him to return a couple of minutes later to inform me that he found the corpse of a little girl in the soak-away.

"I was shocked, and the whole community was thrown into turmoil, but people insisted that it was Baba l'Oyo who was last seen with the girl.

"My residence is just beside the building Baba l'Oyo worked that Friday; so with the discovery of the body, I went to report at the Ojoo Police Station, where the case was transferred to the Apete Police Station, which oversees the community.

"I don't know anything about this case; I don't even have a relationship with Baba l'Oyo in the community, as I just know that he is into menial work, and anyone who needs to get anything done like clearing bushes, calls him.

"It is certain that somebody intentionally dumped the corpse of the little girl in the soak-away, and I am happy that the police investigation is already adding up with the statement of witnesses, who saw Ope in the evening of Friday, when she said Baba l'Oyo sent her on the errand to buy soft drink and biscuit," Alfa Muritala alleged.

The police are, however, investigating the case to know whether the deceased was sexually assaulted before she died.

The Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Oyo State Command, Adekunle Ajisebutu, who confirmed the case, said that an autopsy would be carried out to determine the actual cause of the death of the girl.

However, he alleged that evidences given by witnesses indicated that the principal suspect, Bab L'Oyo knew more than he was telling the police.

He promised that the prime suspect would be charged to court once the ongoing investigation was concluded.