

EndSARS protest: Mother of Isiak recounts how son was killed in Ogbomoso

I saw my son in a pool of his own blood, writhing in pain, she says

By Sunday Adepoju

SINCE last Saturday, it has been anguish for Mrs Ramata Jimoh, who lost her 29-year-old son, Isiak Jimoh, to a stray bullet alleged to have been fired by a police officer attached to the Owode Divisional Police Office, Owode, Ogbomoso.

The late Jimoh, who lost his life when the EndSARS protest rocked parts of Ogbomoso on Saturday, left behind a wife and child, named Nafisat.

When the *Nigerian Tribune* visited the family house of the deceased at Ogiri compound, Ita Alasa area of Ogbomoso North Local Government Area of Oyo State, relatives of the Jimoh family and sympathisers wore mournful looks.

Just before her son's death, Mrs Jimoh narrated that she called Isiak over the phone who responded that he was out for electrical works, but two minutes

later, his phone number was no longer connecting.

Mrs Jimoh, a petty trader, lamented that she had lost a son who was a peace-lover.

She said: "I called my son on phone and he told me he went out for electrical work. I live close to Owode Divisional Police Station where my son was murdered that fateful day.

"When I observed that protesters were already approaching Owode, I called Isiak and I asked him to go back home. He really told me he was going home, but about two minutes later, his phone was no longer reachable.

"What happened next was his dad asking me to come to the Bowen University Teaching Hospital (BUTH), Ogbomoso. I could not hold myself back when I saw my son soaked in blood around his chest. He was also plastered and was writhing in pain."

Summoning courage to

speak, Isiak's father, Mr Atanda Jimoh, a transporter, lamented that his son's death was painful and unforgettable.

He, however, said he took solace in the fact that "God gives and takes."

The parents of Isiak, however, called on the government to arrest the menace of police brutality and support the family that the deceased left behind.

Meanwhile, as protests followed the killing of Isiak has the father appealed to those who were protesting the killing of his son to desist, pointing out that no amount of protest would bring him back.

"It is painful and youths should not continue to waste their lives all in the name of protesting Isiak's killing."

Also expressing regret, the eldest child of the family, Mr Kazeem Jimoh, a bricklayer, decried the loss of a brother he described as easy-going and kind-hearted.

Meanwhile, various reactions have greeted the death of Isiak.

Minister of Youths and Sports Development, Mr Sunday Dare, described the death, alongside a few injured youths during the protest, as sad and regrettable.

In a statement issued by his special adviser on media, Mr John Joshua-Akanji, Dare stressed the need to bring to justice all those responsible for the killing.

He commiserated with the mother of the deceased and the family, promising that the culprits would be brought to book.

"There is a renewed commitment at the highest level of government to institute far-reaching reforms that will see a better era of policing. Our youths are our greatest resources and we must protect them," Dare said.

Also, the Senator representing Oyo North Senatorial District, Dr Abdulfatai

Buhari, and his counterpart representing Oyo Central, Chief Teslim Folarin, condemned the killing of Isiak.

Folarin, the chairman, Senate Committee on Local Content, condemned what he called the extra-judicial killing of Isiak, while Buhari said that it was undemocratic to assault, maim or kill citizens while expressing their fundamental human rights.

A former governor of the state, Chief Adebayo Alao-Akala, also condemned the killing, saying that there is need to respect the sanctity of life and constitutional rights of the citizenry.

Reacting, the *Olugbon* of Orile-Igbon, Oba Francis Olusola Alao, also expressed sadness over the death of Isiak, noting that everybody had the right to protest in a democratic setting.

Oba Alao said: "The killing was really uncalled for. It does not show that the government and the security officials are responsi-

ble, and insensitive to the plight of the people. Protest is civil. The government should listen to the complaint of the people. The government should not be resistant to protests. In a democratic setting, people should be allowed to have peaceful protest."

The Ogbomoso Community Foundation (OCF) cautioned law enforcement agents, especially men of the Nigeria Police Force (NPF), to always apply professionalism in the discharge of their duties.

A statement signed by the leader of OCF, General Oladayo Popoola (retd) advised security agents to always be humane in their approach with members of the public, especially young men and women.

While commending the Inspector-General of Police (IGP) over the banning of SARS, the foundation also stated that a reform of the entire police force was necessary.