

## Crime Feature

# Fulani kidnappers stabbed my husband to death, abducted me, collected ransom for my freedom —Ogun woman



Bruises sustained by Mrs Famurewa from beatings by the kidnappers



The husband where he was stabbed to death

By Oluwatoyin Malik, Crime Editor

**F**OR 46-year-old Mrs Tunrayo Famurewa, her ordeal at the hands of kidnappers is a bad dream from which she longs to wake up. But every day appears to take her back to the fateful evening when she and her husband suffered horror attack from the criminals who were to cause her physical and emotional pains. Not only was she widowed that tragic evening but she also lost her freedom to the kidnappers. Her husband was stabbed and killed during the attack. Two months after the incident, Mrs Famurewa is still nursing her physical injuries while her heart bleeds for her deceased better half.

The Abeokuta-born trader, who is also a resident of the Ogun State capital, was attacked alongside her husband, Mr Festus Famurewa, right in front of their house at the Soyoyo area. The criminals had laid in ambush and waited for the couple to return from the day's work. They abducted the wife while her husband lay dead on the ground.

Mrs Famurewa said: "My husband was a commercial transporter plying Pansheke in Abeokuta to Ikorodu in Lagos. On October 19, he had picked me from my shop at the Kuto area of Abeokuta and we headed home, unknown to me that that would be the last time I would see him alive.

"We got home at about 8.45 p.m. Our children were in school. I was only with a girl living with me. We have no fence built round our house. I got down from the vehicle to open the front door while my husband locked the car doors. Then I heard some people talking to him. Everywhere was dark. There was no power supply.

"I heard my husband trying to comprehend who these people said they were. There were five of them. At that point, they started shooting sporadically. I began to cry for help, begging people to save us from the Fulanis. My cry enraged them. They descended on me with serious beating. It was too much. My hand is still swollen. Some of the kidnappers concentrated their attack on my husband. The girl living with me ran away to safety.

"Somehow I managed to escape but when I didn't hear my husband again, I went to check him by the car where I saw that he had been stabbed to death. There was blood everywhere in front of our house. I have not slept in our house ever since. I have been staying with my sister. I asked people to help me cover my husband's blood with sand.

"Without mercy, they descended on me. I asked them what our offence was but they just told me to follow them. I later learnt that our neighbours reported the incident at Lafenwa Police Station where operatives were deployed to evacuate my husband's body to the mortuary.

"They walked me into a bush and we trekked for about 14

hours, stopping at intervals. My feet and hands were pricked by thorns. They became swollen. At that time, my slippers, chain, earrings had cut off. They took my bag and phone. They also took my husband's purse and phone after killing him. They gave me the phone after I was released.

"They didn't beat or touch me in the bush. While we were there, I wondered how I would be saved. I believe that our neighbours called my firstborn. His call came in and it was picked by the kidnappers. They told him to get N50 million as ransom before I would be released. He begged them not to kill his mother but they switched off the phone. At daybreak, I asked them what they wanted. By then, I was in severe pain and discomfort. I showed them my swollen hands and tried to impress on them the need for me to be in the hospital. They threatened to break my head with gun if I bothered them again. Each of the kidnappers had a gun. They were Fulani but they could speak a spatter of Yoruba.

"They replied that I should look for N50 million. I told them it was better for them to kill me because there was nowhere to get such an amount. Later, one of them mentioned N10 million, but I told them it was not available. I reminded them that they had collected my bag containing N700,000. I was to go and buy goods to restock my shop. They asked me how much I had in my account and I told them to check it on my phone. They saw that I was left with just N1,000.

"My sister and my church leader continued the negotiation until they agreed to N2 million. They had insisted on collecting N10 million. When the ransom was to be brought, the kidnappers demanded six plates of cooked rice, bottles of a particular brand of herbal drink, packs of cigarettes, a drug they called seven-powered (*onise meje*), bottles of soft drinks and a certain brand of pain-relieving drug. My sister didn't hear the name of the drug clearly enough so she sent them boxers because that was what the name of the drug sounded like.

"They told us that the ransom should be brought by someone who could ride a motorcycle. My brother who could ride couldn't get our location. He moved around for about four hours. At a point, the kidnappers became angry, telling me that my family members were not serious. They said that they would increase the ransom to N7 million if it was not paid that particular day.

My son pleaded with them to allow him to follow the bike rider who didn't get the direction. They eventually agreed.

## 'How I regained freedom'

"From the night of October 19 till that of October 20, I was with the kidnappers. When the money was eventually brought, they counted it to confirm it was complete. When they were done, they asked my brother and my son to eat from the food

they had brought to be sure that it was not poisoned. Then they asked us to go.

"The day before, after the kidnappers had marched me deep into the bush, they cooked yam in the dead of the night and offered me some to eat but I refused. They mocked me, saying that I would die of hunger. In the evening of the following day, they cooked yam again. This time, I was so hungry that I had no choice but to eat it. I was given four small pieces, out of which I ate two. I buried the remaining two. I got water from a small stream nearby.

## Journey back home

"I was released at about 11.50 p.m. As we were going on the motorcycle, I was praying that they would not shoot us from behind. My people received me at Randa in Abeokuta, from where I was taken to the hospital. I suffered mosquito bites and drank impure water. I survived because I grew up on a farm. Otherwise, I might not have left the bush alive.

"I later realised that the bush I had been taken into was at Olorunda, off Ayetoro Road, via Alamala Barracks. It took us about 15 minutes from the bush to get to Randa. I have been receiving treatment at home ever since I left the hospital. My husband was buried on November 25. I can't go back to our house.

## Suspects' arrest

"Someone sent a piece of news to my sister via WhatsApp and she forwarded it to me. Immediately I saw the pictures of two of them, I pointed at the one who killed my husband. He was the leader. They called him Dogo. My son also recognised him. They put him on an identification parade and I was able to pick him out. My sister had also recorded his voice while negotiating ransom and it was played to him. He became speechless."

*Saturday Tribune* learnt that two of the suspected kidnappers, Umar Mohammed and Aliyu Mohammed, were arrested on Wednesday, December 14, while a kidnap victim, Olorunsogo Oluwaseyi, was rescued unhurt. The victim was also abducted at the Soyoyo area of Abeokuta, the same neighbourhood with the Famurewas.

The kidnappers were reportedly sighted in a forest at Onigbedu area of Ewekoro Local Government Area, which made the Divisional Police Officer in charge of Ewekoro Division, Sunday Opebiyi, a Chief Superintendent of Police, to mobilise his men, in collaboration with So Safe Corps personnel, hunters, vigilantes and some community youths to storm the forest.

The police spokesman in the state, Abimbola Oyeyemi, a Superintendent of Police, said that when the kidnappers sighted the men on the joint operation, they fired gunshots

CONTINUES ON PAGE 13



## Interview

# 'We killed victim because he didn't walk fast enough in the bush —Ogun kidnappers

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

but they were overpowered. Two of them were arrested while the others escaped. Recovered from the two suspects were a single barrel gun with two live cartridges and two expended cartridges, a bag belonging to the victim and some clothes.

Just as it was done to Mrs Famurewa, the victim, Olorunsogo, was abducted in front of his house at about 7.45 pm on December 12 by a six-man kidnap gang.

Not long after, a third suspected member of the kidnap gang, Usman Aliyu, who initially fled, was nabbed. The PPRO disclosed that Aliyu's arrest followed information that he was sighted on a commercial motorcycle at the Onigbedu area moving towards Papalanto, en route Lagos State.

After he was apprehended, the suspect reportedly confessed to being a member of the kidnap gang. He revealed that they were six in number.

Aliyu said he decided to come out and take a commercial motorcycle out of that vicinity following the continued combing of the bush by the police and other security agents.

He said his gang was responsible for the kidnap of one Owolabi Abiodun and one Fakorede Kazeem at Kipe village, Idi Ori, Abeokuta, on October 7. He said the gang members killed Kazeem because he couldn't walk fast while the victims were being taken into the bush.

According to him, the gang also kidnapped 10-year-old girl, Esther Adekunle and her brother, Adebayo, 15, at Olomowewe Street, Randa, Abeokuta, on October 10. He also mentioned Mrs Famurewa's kidnap on October 19 at Abule Ijaye, Soyoyo, Abeokuta, at the entrance of their house after killing her 65-year-old husband. He said that the gang released the wife after payment of ransom.

Not done, Aliyu said that the gang kidnapped Olatunji Azeez and Osoba Moroof on November 16 at Olujobi town, Itori, and



Mr and Mrs Famurewa before the attack.

set them free after collecting ransom. It was learnt that all their victims, including the two children, identified the suspects as their abductors.

The state Commissioner of Police, Lanre Bankole, praised police operatives and commended members of the public for supporting



Another spot of bruises on the victim.

the police by giving them necessary information. He gave the assurance that the remaining gang members would be apprehended.

The commissioner directed that the arrested suspects be transferred to the anti-kidnapping unit of the State Criminal Investigation Department for further investigation.