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Policeman kills fresh graduate in Rivers

By Ibanga Isine

A trigger happy policeman on Friday in Port Harcourt, Rivers State shot and killed Mr. Uche Kenneth, a fresh graduate of Mechanical Engineering from the State University of Science and Technology.

A witness said the victim was shot along Ada George Road, while driving against the traffic, apparently to beat the long lines of vehicles trapped on the congested road.

According to him, trouble started when the slain youth, who drove on a Jetta salon car, came to a checkpoint mounted by policemen from a nearby police station.

He said the armed policemen at the checkpoint ordered the youth to stop and reverse to where he could rejoin the traffic.

But just as the boy obeyed and struggled to manoeuvre the car back, one of the policemen coked an AK 47 rifle and immediately shot first on the tyre of the car.

Not yet done, he pointed the gun at the boy and pulled the trigger while his colleagues screamed on top of their voices, trying to call him to order.

The eye witness claimed that the policeman shot the boy at a close range and left him there struggling for life and begging for help.

"He was actually going on reverse gear when one of the policemen shot him. We could not do anything because the policemen were armed and they would not allow the boy to be rushed to a hospital.

"It was when the boy might have lost so much blood that a pastor from a church near

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the scene, who also witnessed the shooting, took the victim to the hospital.

"He died on the road and his corpse was rejected by the hospital authority. He was left inside the car for several hours before policemen from the nearby station brought an ambulance to take his remains away."

A friend of the deceased, who pleaded anonymity, said Uche graduated with a Second Class Upper degree from RSUST and was the best student in his set.

He lamented that the parents of the deceased were terribly hurt by the killing of the youngster, who had established his own business not long after completing his degree programme.

"Uche was not a troublesome fellow. Nobody understands why the policeman opened fire on him. They said he drove against the traffic but that is not enough reason for him to be killed like a thief.

"The police claimed that the killer has escaped but we know that they are trying to cover up and may transfer him out of the state.

"The other policemen, who were on the roadblock showed negligence by not restraining the killer cop. They are equally culpable for standing by and watching without doing anything to save Uche's life after he was shot."

When contacted, the state Commissioner of Police, Mr. Bala Hassan confirmed the killing to our correspondent on the telephone.

He said that the command had already commenced investigation into the murder, but that the killer cop was yet to be apprehended.

Hassan, who, however, appealed for calm, vowed that the command would do everything within its power to ensure that justice was done in the matter.

He said, "I have received report on the killing of the young man and have ordered that the matter be urgently investigated. There was no basis for the policeman to shoot the boy if he drove on the wrong side of the traffic.

"The victim, I learnt, was even trying to reverse when he was shot and this means that he never posed a threat to policemen on duty. We will get to the root of the matter."

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