

Eight policemen arrested for alleged murder

Akin Oyedele, Ado-Ekiti

EIGHT policemen attached to the Ikole Area Command of the Ekiti State Police command have been arrested in connection with the alleged killing of a farmer at the Ayedun/Ayebode end of the Ikole-Ekiti-Abuja highway.

The policemen were arrested following the alleged manner they hounded the victim, identified simply as Musa, to death while riding on a motorcycle with his friend, who also fractured his foot.

The police authorities were said to have also sent a delegation to commiserate with the family of the deceased

on the incident, with a promise to ensure that justice was done.

Witnesses said the Ebira man and his friend were on their way to the farm when the policemen allegedly accosted them at a roadblock in Ayebode and extorted N1000 from them, on Monday.

The Deputy Commissioner of Police of the state command, Mr. Nicholas Nkemdeme, however, gave an account slightly different from the eyewitnesses' account.

The community was thrown into mourning when the death of the man, who was said to have left behind

an aged mother and a family, filtered through to the town, which reacted spontaneously.

Travellers caught in the fury were stranded for more than four hours as youths in the town blocked the busy highway, while the body of the victim was left in the middle of the road.

Narrating the incident that led to the standstill, a witness alleged that the police team had demanded N20 gratification from the victim thinking that he was a commercial motorcyclist, popularly known as *okada*.

When the policemen insisted on collecting the gratification, the victim was

said to have pleaded with them that the denomination on him was N1,000, which they were alleged to have forcibly collected.

A hot verbal exchange was said to have ensued when the policemen allegedly refused to part with the expected N980 balance with the victim allegedly saying that the act was no less than robbery at gun point.

Enraged with the effrontery of the friend, the policemen were said to have hurried into their van and gave them a hot pursuit.

In an attempt to force the motorcycle to a halt, the driver of the van was said to have hit

the motorcycle, the impact of which was said to have flung the men against an electric pole.

In an interview with our correspondent, the DCP, however, denied that money was the root of the incident.

Nkemdeme said, "The man was carrying a passenger on his motorcycle on the day of the incident. When policemen from the area commander's office at the checkpoint flagged them down, they refused to stop.

"They (policemen) decided to pursue him with their vehicle. It was later learnt that the driver skidded off the road and hit his (victim) head against an electric pole."

Many Nigerians still poor —Gowon

Olufemi Adeosun, Abuja

FORMER Head of State and Chairman, Committee on Social Security, Gen Yakubu Gowon, on Thursday lamented the level of poverty in the country, insisting that majority of the people still lacked basic necessities of life.

Gowon said these in Abuja during the presentation of the draft document on National Security Policy to the Minister of Labour and Productivity, Mr. Adetokunbo Kayode.

He said the steady decline in the standard of living of the people, as well as the erosion

