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Lagos dismisses claim of tollgate protester's death

January 19, 2012 by Sesan Olufowobi [8 Comments](#)



The Lagos State Government on Wednesday insisted that nobody died in the December 17, 2011 protest against the commencement of tolling at the Lekki-Epe Expressway.

This was the position of the government at a media briefing jointly addressed by the Commissioners for Information, Remi Ibirogbu; Environment, Tunji Bello and the Attorney-General and Commissioner for Justice, Ade Ipaye.

The state government expressed concern that a media house still aided some people to incite the public by publishing paid adverts that a person died in the protest despite the fact that investigation revealed that nothing of such happened.

The commissioners said the government had no option but to seek redress at the Nigerian Press Council and using available legal means to fight its cause.

Presenting the report of the committee set up by Governor Babatunde Fashola to investigate reported incidents during the protests, Ipaye said while it was established that the protest turned rowdy, there was no death. He added that Femi Ogunsanya, who was reported dead, was later brought

alive to the public domain to clear the air on the issue.

He said, "We established that there was a protest, and the protesters conducted themselves peacefully from Lekki Phase 1 gate where the protest started.

"But on getting to the toll plaza, the protesters sat on the road to prevent other motorists from using the expressway. Police had no choice but to remove the protesters from the road. They also arrested a man for allegedly vandalising the Police Black Maria. The protesters tried to prevent the arrest and there was confusion. Police later dispersed the protesters.

"We were able to ascertain that 39-year-old Femi Ogunsanya, who was reported dead, did not die. The report of death was doctored to incite further riot in the area. We brought him out to inform the public to disclaim the report of death.

"The truth is neither Ogunsanya nor anybody else died in the protest. Some media houses had published corrigendum after the truth was revealed. But the continued report of the falsehood showed mischief and we are taking up the issue as legally as we can."

Ibirogbba presented a video interview with Ogunsanya, where he (Ogunsanya) said he did not die. He recounted that he lost consciousness after a policeman hit him on the head with the butt of his gun.

Bello said the government would go to NPC to seek redress based on ethics of journalism and settle the rest at the court of law.

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