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Dead body found in Lagos market causes protest

JUNE 23, 2014 BY EMEKA OBI 9 COMMENTS

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The scene of the protest. Inset: The corpse

| credits: Emeka Obi

Youths and some traders at the Alaba International Market, Ojo, Lagos State, on Saturday blocked the road leading to the market to protest the dumping of a dead body in the market since Thursday morning.

The protesters, who burned tyres in the middle of the road, obstructed the free flow of traffic and insisted that they would leave the road after the appropriate authorities had evacuated the corpse, which had become swollen and smelled.

One of the protesters, who identified himself simply as, John, said they were protesting the failure of the authorities to do their job and safeguard the health of the traders in the market.

"We can no longer accommodate this body here. It is decaying and the stench is becoming unbearable. We will remain on this road until the council officials do their job by removing this it," he said.

One of the policemen deployed in the area told our correspondent that the Divisional Police Officer had contacted the council to evacuate the body.

The policeman, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, said, "Our DPO has called the council to evacuate the body."

PUNCH Metro gathered that the traders were greeted with the sight of the dead body dumped in a canal at the market on Thursday morning.

Eyewitnesses said the body was wrapped. According to them, arrangement was made for the body to be brought out from the canal so it could be identified, but no one was able to identify it.

It was also observed on Friday when *PUNCH Metro* earlier visited the area that the body, which was beginning to decay, was that of a young lady.

A trader, who claimed to have seen the body when it was brought out from the canal, said that the lady might have been used for money ritual as some parts of her body had been mutilated.

The eyewitness, who identified himself simply as ID, said, "When I saw people gather here (pointing to the spot), I also went to see what was happening. We noticed that the object inside the water was a human body because the legs were showing. Every other parts of the body were covered. We brought it out to see if anybody could identify it. We discovered that it was a female body and some parts of the body were missing."

A petty trader, who sells food items close to the spot where the corpse was dumped, complained that the incident had adversely affected her business, pleading with the government to evacuate the body.

The trader, who pleaded anonymity, said, "Since we discovered the body here yesterday (Thursday), I have not been able to make good sales. I am appealing to the government to remove the body from here".

A shop owner, who also pleaded anonymity, complained that the market task force had not done anything



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since the body was found.

When *PUNCH Metro* visited the task force office, a man who claimed to be the task force chairman admitted that they had yet to alert the appropriate authorities to the presence of the dead body. The man, who gave his name as Mr. Alexander John, said, "We have not really done much on this issue because we are still observing the situation. But I think the police are aware of the discovery."

The Lagos State Police Public Relations Officer, Ngozi Braide, on Friday said the police had yet to be alerted about the presence of the body. She, however, promised to alert the DPO in charge of the area.

Also when contacted on Friday, the council authorities said that they had yet to receive a formal complaint on the issue, but promised to do something about it.

It was however learnt that the body was finally evacuated on later on Saturday.

The Head, Environmental Unit, in the council, identified simply as Mrs. Shittu, called our correspondent on the telephone and said, "We have finally removed the body. The protesters almost mobbed the officials that went to do the job. I want to thank you for your concern."

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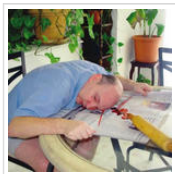


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