

# Orthopaedic hospital seizes corpse, Islamic family kicks

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Bashiru Makanjuola

4348

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The National Orthopaedic Hospital, Igbobi, Lagos (NOHIL), has been accused of seizing the corpse of a 61-year-old man, Bashiru Makanjuola, over the inability of his family to pay bills totalling N471,810.

The family members told *PUNCH Metro* that they were distraught over the development, saying the

deceased was supposed to have been buried the same day he died according to Islamic rites.

They said the remains of Bashiru, who was survived by four wives and eight children, had been held by the hospital for over one month.

The third child of the family, Azeez, explained that his father had been crushed by a hit-and-run driver in Oshodi on September 1, 2015, while attempting to cross the road.

He said the deceased was first rushed to the Lagos State University Teaching Hospital, Ikeja, but was referred to the NOHIL, where he was admitted.

He said, "We got to Igbobi at about 11.30pm and he was admitted at the hospital's casualty ward. He was seriously injured and the driver of the bus that hit him had fled.

"On September 5, he was moved to the Intensive Care Unit, where an operation was conducted on him to treat the internal wound he sustained. We were not told the charge. It was later the management said we were to pay N29, 000 per day.

"By then, he had spent 10 days and we quickly asked them to take him back to the ward, and he was taken to Ward J. But the hospital said we should first settle the ICU bill of N288, 000 before they can continue treatment. We begged them to continue, that we would pay, but they refused."

He said the family wrote a letter to the Chief Medical Director after Bashiru was left unattended to for a week in the ward.

A copy of the letter, which was obtained by our correspondent, stated that the family had then been given bills totalling N436,000.

The letter, dated October 2, added that despite the payment of N115,000 out of the bills, the 61-year-old was left unattended to.

It read in part, "We spoke with some doctors and asked what was going on. The reply we got was that the patient had been discharged and they could no longer give him any treatment, that we should go and settle our bills and take him away.

“We appealed to them to continue with the treatment, promising to settle the bills later. We later asked them to release the patient to us since we were financially handicapped. This man is a mere butcher; he has nothing to dispose of to settle his bills. The man’s flesh is peeling on the bed. He has a very big wound on his back and lap; and he has not been treated.

“But we were told that even if he died, we were still going to settle his bills before his remains would be released to us.”

It was learnt that it took four days before the CMD ordered that Basiru should be treated.

However, our correspondent learnt that the wounds by then had festered.

Azeez said, “Because he had been abandoned for so long, he started having problems with his back. They didn’t dress him or turn him.

“We asked them to let us take him away from the hospital to somewhere else, but they insisted that we must settle the bills before they would discharge him. And because we did not have any money, we left him at the hospital, where he eventually died.”

*PUNCH Metro* learnt that the deceased was deposited in the hospital morgue on December 6, despite the protest of the family.

“We wrote another letter to them, urging them to reduce the total amount, but they were adamant. We spent a lot of money on tests, drugs and X-rays. We begged them, but they told us that the MD said our bills could not be overlooked and that we should pay what we owed,” Azeez added.

A relative of the deceased, Bashiru Adeniyi, accused the hospital management of negligence, saying the victim would not have died if he was not abandoned.

Adeniyi said the family had spent over N1m on the treatment, adding that there was no justification for the insistence of the hospital on collecting N471,810.

“Their negligence killed the man. Now, they have seized the corpse and all our appeals have gone unheeded. He was supposed to be buried the same day, but they took him to the morgue because of the money. They are threatening us that they would cremate the corpse if we don’t clear the bills. They said

apart from the 371,810 hospital bills, we will pay N100,000 for the mortuary bill, which is still accumulating.

“If they had released him to us earlier when we wrote the second letter, maybe he would not have died,” he said.

When our correspondent contacted the NOHIL CMD, Dr. Olurunbi Odunubi, he declined comment.

He asked our correspondent to write a letter to the hospital.

A text message, detailing the case, sent to him had yet to be replied to as of the time of filing this report.

However, an official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, dismissed the allegations, saying the family wanted to smear the image of the hospital.

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