

# Family tackles police, LAWMA over graduate's death

March 29, 2016



*Pamela*

## **Afeeze Hanafi**

Family members of a 25-year-old university graduate, Pamela Onyeukwu, say they have lost confidence in the police's ability to prosecute the driver of the Lagos State Waste Management Authority, who allegedly killed their member.

They said the police prosecutor in charge of the matter had yet to forward the case file involving the driver, Ibrahim Are, to the Directorate of Public Prosecutions as ordered by an Ikeja Magistrate's Court, where he was arraigned in April, 2015.

It was learnt that Pamela had taken her sister, who was going for an interview on the Victoria Island, to Coca Cola bus stop, Ikeja, around 5am on March 18, 2015. She was returning home when the truck rammed into her Toyota Matrix car in the Oregun area.

The microbiology graduate and ex-employee of Etisalat died on the spot while the driver was arrested.

Pamela's father, Charles Onyeukwu, a retiree, said she was the breadwinner of the family and called on the state Commissioner of Police, Fatai Owoseni, to prevail on the prosecutor to ensure that justice was done on the case.

He said, "On March 18, 2015, around 6am, a policeman called me that my daughter was involved in an accident around Oregun and that I should come immediately. The policeman took me to the Alausa Police Division. On getting there, he took me to a senior officer's office, who told me that my daughter died.

"This is a young lady who finished from The Bells University of Technology. She worked with Etisalat and was the breadwinner of the family. I am a retiree. Her sister was going for a job interview when the incident happened. It was a big blow to the family.

"We later understood that the police granted the driver administrative bail, whereas he was supposed to be taken to court to decide the bail. We were not in court when the case first came up. On February 29, 2016, the matter came up again and we were there. It was mentioned that the police have sent the case file to the Directorate of Public Prosecutions for advice.

"The magistrate adjourned the case till May 9, 2016, and said if the police failed to send the case file to the DPP by the next adjourned date, he would strike it out. Should a case that involves life be treated like this? We believe the commissioner of police should be able to get to the root of this matter and know who delayed the movement of the case file to the DPP."

The father lamented that LAWMA had stopped reaching out to the family since April 2015 when negotiations to settle the case amicably ended in deadlock.

He said, "The LAWMA MD then, Mr. Ola Oresanya, said he was sorry on behalf of the agency. He promised that the agency would participate in the funeral. He came back in April and said the management had decided to give the family N1m as compensation. Is the N1m worth her life or the funeral or the car that was completely damaged? He left and came back, saying he had added N250,000. We rejected it and since then, LAWMA has not contacted us.

"We learnt the truck driver was coming from an opposite direction without headlamps. We have informed our family lawyer and we are ready to take LAWMA to court," he added.

The deceased's younger brother, Samuel, said he could hardly identify his sister when he saw her corpse and urged that the case should not be abandoned.

He said, "It has been very traumatic to see her depart in such a tragic way. It is unfair for the police and the government to try to sweep the case under the carpet."

A family friend, Ehi Iden, said the government did not give the incident the attention it deserved, adding that it would send a wrong signal to the public if the case was not properly prosecuted.

The Lagos State Police spokesperson, DSP Dolapo Badmos, said the command would allow the law to take its course.

"The incident happened a year ago, when the present CP had not been transferred to the command. The police will look into it and make sure that the right thing is done. The case will be properly prosecuted," she said.

When contacted last Tuesday, a LAWMA spokesperson, who did not want to be named, said the agency would review the incident and get back to our correspondent, but he had yet to do so as of time of filing this report.

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