

# Company driver dies after NDLEA torture in Kogi

July 6, 2016



## **Olaleye Aluko**

A company driver, Moruf Haruna, has died after he was allegedly kicked in the stomach by an officer of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency in the Abaji area of Kogi State.

*PUNCH Metro* learnt that 40-year-old Haruna, who worked for Vintage Transport and Logistics, was allegedly manhandled by the officer when an NDLEA team stopped his vehicle for a search in the Abaji area.

Our correspondent gathered that Haruna, a father of five children, and another company driver, identified only as Fatai, had left the Ojota area of Lagos State on Friday, in two separate trucks.

The drivers were said to be conveying food products to Jos, Plateau State, and Abuja, respectively.

*PUNCH Metro* learnt that on Saturday, at about 5am, Haruna was stopped around Abaji, about 30 kilometres from the Federal Capital Territory by the NDLEA officers.

The officers were said to have ordered Haruna to produce his papers, which he did, and afterwards asked him to open the truck for a search.

Our correspondent gathered that Haruna was allegedly reluctant, during which one of the NDLEA officers, whose name had yet to be ascertained, kicked him in the stomach.

He reportedly fell and became unconscious.

*PUNCH Metro* was told that the NDLEA officers took him to a hospital in Abuja for medical treatment but he died on Monday, a few hours after he was discharged.

Haruna's 'motor boy', identified only as Matthew, told our correspondent that there were seven NDLEA officers at the checkpoint, adding that the NDLEA officer that kicked his boss also stamped his legs on Haruna's stomach.

He said, "We were going to Jos around 5am on Saturday. The NDLEA officers were seven and their leader held a gun. Others held clubs. One of them stopped our truck and we tried to park by the roadside. While doing that, he hurled insults at us.

"When my boss (Haruna) came down, the officer first beat him with a club. My boss told him there was no reason for the abuse as we were carrying lawful goods. The officer got angry and kicked him in the stomach.

"He fell and the officer 'marched' on his stomach. It was when they noticed he was not moving that they decided to rush him to a hospital.

"He died in Jos on Monday around 4am. I am still at the hospital as an autopsy will be conducted on him."

The Managing Director, Vintage Transport and Logistics, Lekan Akinkitan, said Haruna had worked with the company for 10 years before the tragedy.

He said, "Two of our drivers left on that Friday. Haruna was to deliver goods at Jos, while Fatai was heading for Abuja; but the two men left together. We transport United African Company products. The waybill and other documents were intact. Neither of the drivers carried unlawful goods.

"When he got to the Abaji area, about 30 kilometers from Abuja, he was stopped and tortured by the NDLEA officials. When he passed out, the officials rushed him to a hospital in Abuja.

"In fairness, the NDLEA paid his medical bills and he was discharged on Monday. But when he got to Jos, his health failed again and he died.

"Haruna was not an irresponsible driver. He had worked for the company for about 10 years. He had a dependant father, mother, wife and five children. I am shocked how he passed away suddenly after the NDLEA's torture."

The NDLEA spokesperson, Mitchell Ofoyeju, said Haruna sustained injuries during the search – when he tried to resist the officers from doing their lawful duties.

Ofoyeju added that after first-aid treatment was given to the driver, he was discharged and the agency had not been briefed that he had died.

He said, "The driver initially refused to stop. When he did, the officers demanded to search his vehicle but he refused.

"He resisted them from doing their lawful duty. In the process, he had an injury. As a responsible organisation, we decided to take him for treatment.

"We have not been briefed that he is dead. We will have to confirm that. The agency is going to investigate the cause of his death because we respect citizens, as we are an agency paid by taxpayers' money."

***Copyright PUNCH.***

*All rights reserved. This material, and other digital content on this website, may not be reproduced, published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed in whole or in part without prior express written permission from PUNCH.*

**Contact: [editor@punchng.com](mailto:editor@punchng.com)**