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FEATURED

Policemen shoot protesting Chi Limited workers, kill two

January 4, 2017

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Two casual workers with Chi Limited have lost their lives after a team of policemen opened fire on them during a protest at the company's headquarters on Ajao Estate, Lagos State.

The deceased, 19-year-old Daniel Osikoya, and the other, whose name had yet to be ascertained, died from the gun injuries they sustained in the leg and thigh respectively.

Daniel was said to have joined the company a few days before the incident.

However, the Lagos State Police Command said the workers had attacked policemen deployed in the area with caustic soda, injuring an inspector.

It added that the operatives responded within the ambit of the rules of engagement.

PUNCH Metro learnt that the workers had protested against perceived discrimination between them and the regular employees, saying the management only cater to the welfare of the full-time workers.

Some of the casual workers, who spoke to our correspondent on condition of anonymity for fear of losing their jobs, said the distribution of Yuletide gift items by the company to only regular workers was the last straw that broke the camel's back.

The protesters, who work at the production department, said they deliberated and agreed that each of them would take away a carton of the company's products – which range from Chivita juice, Happy Hour to Ice tea and Caprizone, among other dairy products – as their own New Year packages.

“It is pure injustice to give only the full-time workers gifts without giving any to casual workers, who do most of the jobs. That was why we fought for our rights. It is unfair for the policemen to attack us. We were about to move the cartons out of the company's gate when the policemen invited by one of the company's security men started shooting.

“Bullets hit Daniel in the thigh and another worker was shot in the leg. I was with the two workers that were shot; it was God that saved me. They shot at us as if we were thieves.

“They were not taken to a hospital on time and Daniel died around 8am that day. He bled to death. The other victim died this afternoon (Tuesday). Because of that incident, we were not allowed to work,” a worker said.

A patrol van of men of the Rapid Response Squad stationed in one of the company's gates was observed by our correspondent, who visited the area on Tuesday. Casual workers were denied access into the company.

Another worker, who claimed to have spent two years in the company, said, “Each worker usually takes away a carton of drink at the end of the year. Some production workers on afternoon duty had already taken some cartons on Friday and our bosses didn't talk.

“Those on night duty wanted to leave with their own cartons around 5am on Saturday when the policemen started shooting. Two persons died from the injuries they sustained.”

“Later, policemen attached to the company came to the gate and told their colleagues to let us go with the products.

“Most members of the management are Indians. They are treating us like slaves in our own country.”

The late Daniel’s father, Olufemi Osikoya, said the company did not contact the family on time, adding that they had informed their family lawyer to institute a legal action against the company.

He said, “My son was a decent person. If not for some issues the family is sorting out, he was supposed to have been in a higher institution.

“He was shot in two places. Instead of them to rush him to a public hospital, he was taken to the company’s clinic.

“We were called around 7am. When I got there, he was groaning in pain and had lost much blood.

“He gave up immediately we got to the Lagos State University Teaching Hospital, Ikeja. He joined the company in December. I learnt that his colleague that was shot is also dead.”

One of the company’s receptionists, who identified herself only as Lorrita, told *PUNCH Metro* that the official, who would make official comment on the occurrence, was not around.

The Police Public Relations Officer in Lagos, SP Dolapo Badmos, said the workers were violent.

She said, “The command received a distress call that workers of Chi Limited were disrupting business activities of the company.

“The command’s operatives were mobilised to the scene to douse tension, but the workers attacked the policemen, throwing caustic soda at them.

“As a result, one inspector suffered severe burns and he is recovering in a hospital. Why should a policeman on duty be attacked? That attitude should stop.

“Attacks on policemen are not right and must be condemned; they are also human beings with families.

“The command received the report that one person was shot dead.

“There is what we call rules of engagement and use of firearms under the police acts and regulations.

“The command has studied the situation and discovered that the personnel deployed acted in accordance with the rules.”

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