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Nigerians want justice for man beaten to death by soldiers

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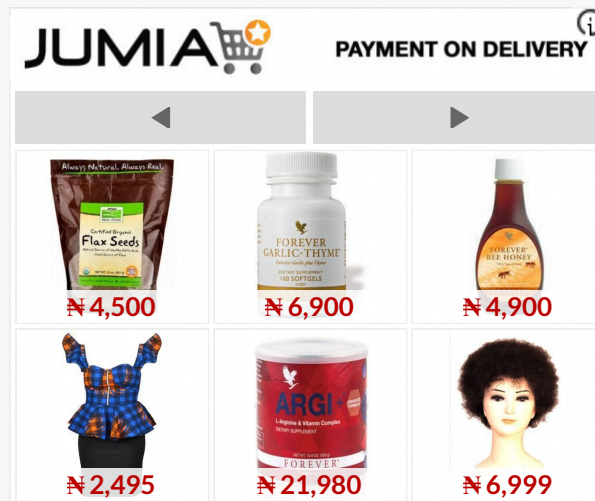
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- Army denies involvement

Afeez Hanafi

attracting strong criticism.



Oyekan died on Friday.

Nigerians, who reacted to the incident on the social media, asked the Nigerian Army to produce the erring soldiers for prosecution.

Although the army debunked soldiers' involvement in the killing of the 40-year-old businessman, the Ogun State Police Command vowed that the soldiers would be identified and brought to book.

[Police confirm death of man allegedly brutalised by soldiers](#)

It had been reported that one Tunji, the son of Oyekan's landlady on Prince Jamiu Oyebade Street, Ogijo, had on March 8 brought four soldiers from the battalion to torture him and his wife, Mrs. Glory Fagbayide, for allegedly insulting his mother.

After allegedly beating up the couple in their apartment, the soldiers reportedly took them to their barracks in Ita Oluwo for another round of torture during which Oyekan's jaws and neck were affected.

The deceased's wife had told our correspondent that the soldiers dispossessed Oyekan of a Nokia Lumia phone and a sum of N84,000, adding that the clothes dealer died on the way to the Ikorodu General Hospital after his health worsened on Friday.

Nigerians, who reacted to the report of the incident on *PUNCH Online*, lamented that assaults by military men were becoming alarming.

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“The soldiers should be made to face the music just like the recent ex-policemen in the case of the Apo killings. The media and human rights activists should stand up for this case. The fight against police and military brutality is a daunting one, but should start somewhere,” a commentator, identified only as Simeon, wrote.

Another reader, Ayodele Sanni, said the assaults were in violation of democratic rules, and urged federal and state governments to check the soldiers’ excesses.

He wrote, “Are we in a military regime? Soldiers must not be involved in civilian disputes. It is time the governors of concerned states wade into this serious issue.

“If they are really bored and need combat action, the Federal Government should deploy them in hot zones like the North-East to face Boko Haram.”

A commentator, who gave his name as Laddeck, also decried the spate of attacks on civilians by security agents and demanded stiff punishments for perpetrators.

“This year alone, we have had many cases of gross indiscipline by soldiers, naval ratings and airmen, officials of DSS, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, customs, (police’s is a daily occurrence).

“It is obvious the military is doing nothing about it despite all the tough comments. It is now safe to assume that all Nigerians in service uniforms are mentally damaged...and it is best to avoid any conflict with them,” Laddeck wrote.

The Ogun State Police Public Relations Officer, ASP Ambibola Oyeyemi, assured the deceased’s family and members of the public that all the perpetrators would be brought to book.

transferred to the homicide section of the State Criminal Investigation and Intelligence Department, Eleweran, for discreet investigation.

“The public should be rest assured that justice will be done. There won’t be any cover-up. When somebody’s life is taken unlawfully, the perpetrators must be brought to book.”

The Director, Army Public Relations, Brig. Gen. Sani Usman, in a statement on Sunday, however, absolved soldiers of Oyekan’s death, and accused one Kenny Adesanya, of misinforming the public.

“The attention of the Nigerian Army has been drawn to media reports and photograph of the corpse of one Mr. George (Oyekan) allegedly murdered by troops of 174 Battalion, Ikorodu. The story and the photograph were ostensibly shared by one Mr. Kenny Abel Adesanya through his *twitter* handle.

“However, investigation has confirmed that the allegation is not true. Rather, it was a figment of Adesanya’s imagination borne out of mischief and hatred for the Nigerian Army and an attempt to divert attention from those that committed the dastardly act.

“For the avoidance of doubt, the location where the incident took place, Ogijo, is in Ogun State and 174 Battalion does not have any deployment there, neither does any of our troops patrol the area.

“A team was dispatched to the Ogijo Police Station to investigate the matter. It was confirmed that the incident dates back to March 8, 2017. George (now late) was threatened by the son of his landlady that he would invite his soldier friends to beat him for failing to pay his rent which was long overdue. On the day, the tenant was taken from the compound by three young men and beaten up. The case was reported at the Ogijo Police Station. The parties involved were arrested and their statements taken.

“Thereafter, the police wanted to charge the matter to court for which the tenant and the landlady opted for out of court settlement. The young men who carried out the beating were neither arrested nor their identity ascertained by the police. The police claimed that the landlady’s son said he used his friends. The case was, however, treated as assault. No report was sent to the military authorities because no soldier was involved,” the statement read in part.

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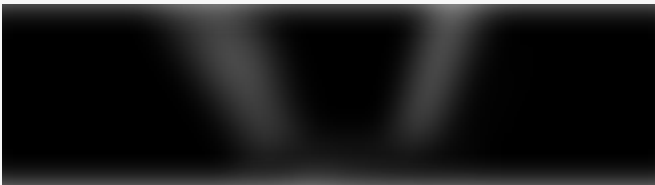
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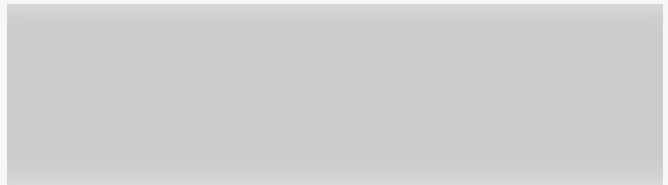
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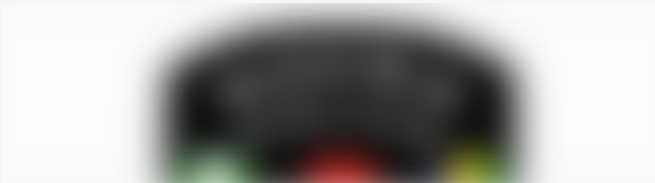
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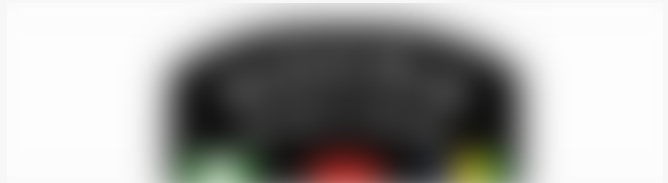
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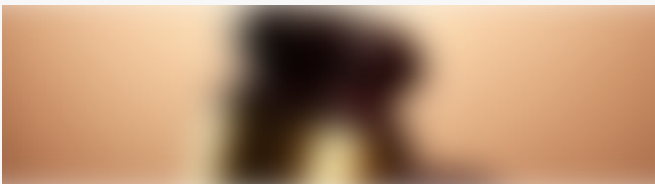
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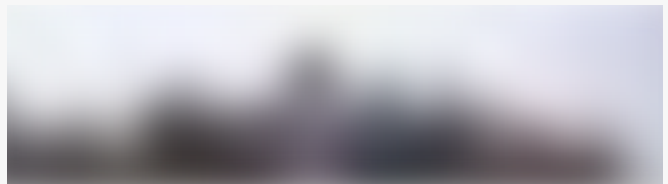
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