

# LASG truck kills apprentice, passerby after task force raid

**Published** February 9, 2018



• The vehicle; sympathisers at the scene Photos: Afeez Hanafi; LAGESC

**Afeez Hanafi**

An operational vehicle belonging to the Lagos State Environmental and Sanitation Corps reportedly killed two persons on Thursday at Ojuwoye Market junction, Mushin.

The victims were a 17-year-old apprentice hairdresser identified only as Medinat, and a female passerby.

Two other persons were also said to have sustained varying degrees of injury as task force policemen reportedly shot into the air to disperse angry youths.

*PUNCH Metro* learnt that men of the Lagos State Task Force on Environmental and Special Offences (Enforcement) Unit had raided Isolo Road around 9am and impounded many commercial motorcycles.

It was gathered that while the motorcyclists were protesting against the seizure, the LAGESC officials entered the scene in their truck.

An *okada* rider, Wale Adewale, said the truck driver was caught in the midst of the protesters as he lost control, veered into Ojuwoye Market junction and crushed Medinat and the elderly passerby.

He said, “An LT bus driver, who we suspect to be a task force official, had blocked the road with his bus to prevent motorcyclists from going out. Some task force officials suddenly arrived and impounded motorcycles. The youths became angry and staged a protest.

“Their grievance is because task force officials come here on a weekly basis. They beat up whoever they arrest and seize his motorcycle. If the person can pay N15,000 instantly, he will be released. If he fails, he will be arraigned in a mobile court in Oshodi.

“While the LAGESC operational vehicle was heading towards the scene, it lost control and hit a bus and the fence of a Total Filling Station. The vehicle crushed two people to death at the market junction.”

During a visit to the scene, our correspondent observed the impact of the crash on the filling station fence, while some structures on which traders displayed their wares were destroyed.

A trader, Medinat Akinleye, said the *okada* riders were angry because the rate at which their motorcycles were being seized by task force officials was high.

“Some of the riders are jobless graduates. They used loans to buy the motorcycles. It was during the *okada* riders’ protest that the LAGESC vehicle lost control and killed two persons,” she added.

A motorcycle rider, Wasiu Adebowale, said although the LAGESC officials were not involved in the raid, they were also fond of extorting money from motorcycle riders.

“We pay between N5,000 and N10,000 before our motorcycles are released. They would take the motorcycles to an uncompleted building in the post office area pending when we pay them,” he added.

Medinat’s boss, Kudirat, was too distraught to speak when our correspondent visited her shop.

But her friend, who gave her name only as Yetunde, said she witnessed Medinat’s dying moment under the vehicle where she was trapped.

She alleged that task force officials shot into the air and prevented youths from rescuing her.

Yetunde said, “She (Medinat) was learning hairdressing. She helped her boss to take her children to school and was coming back when the LAGESC Black Maria knocked her down.

“She raised her hands, begging for help. People wanted to rescue her, but the task force policemen shot into the air and they ran away. She was screaming. I was watching from afar and screaming too. It was

after she died that they removed her body. She would have survived if they rescued her. She was 17-year-old.”

Our correspondent was told that Medinat lived in the Papa Ajao area of the state and her parents had yet to be informed about her death as of 3pm on Thursday.

Her boss, Kudirat, passed out and was being rushed to a hospital when *PUNCH Metro* left the area.

A resident, Ibrahim Adeboyejo, said his friend, Shuaibu Opeloyeru, was arrested for covering the incident.

“Shuaibu (Opeloyeru) and I rushed to the Ojuwoye Market junction when we heard about the incident. We saw Medinat under the vehicle groaning with pains, but policemen did not allow us to rescue her. One of them accosted Shuaibu while he was recording the incident with his phone. They whisked him away to their office in Oshodi,” he said.

Another resident, Abdulhameed Sulyman added, “A man who was going to work was hit by a stray bullet. We are not sure whether he died or not. Those that carried out the raid must be brought to book.”

The spokesperson for the task force, Taofiq Adebayo, confirmed that the agency raided the area, but denied the shootings.

He said, “Our men were at the area to enforce the restriction of motorcycles on the road. A handful of motorcycles were impounded and brought to our office. It was when our men got to the office that we learnt that there was a rampage around the area caused by hoodlums. Our men and Area D policemen were mobilised to the area and they restored peace. None of our policemen shot and we did not arrest anybody for recording the incident.

“Our men do not collect money to release impounded motorcycles. Any official that demands money should be reported.”

The LAGESC spokesperson, Rahmat Alabi, who said she was not aware of the deaths, said two officials of the corps were injured, while the operational vehicle was vandalised.

She also refuted the allegation that the corps officials extorted money from the motorcycle riders.

She said, “Task force officials had raided the area. Some area boys and okada riders saw our men who were on routine surveillance and unleashed terror on them. In an attempt to escape, our driver rammed

the vehicle into a waste bin. They threw stones at our officials and seriously injured the driver and another official.”