

LASTMA officials kick over reported death of killer F-SARS operative

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Rotimi Adeyemo

• CP orders posthumous trial, dismissal of cop

Samson Folarin and Deji Lambo

The Lagos State Police Command has been asked to show incontrovertible evidence of the death of an operative of the Federal Special Anti-Robbery Squad, Inspector Olukunle Olonade, who allegedly killed an official of the Lagos State Traffic Management Authority, Rotimi Adeyemo, on Wednesday.

Some LASTMA officers, who spoke to PUNCH Metro on Thursday, urged the police authorities to be sincere in their investigations, adding that only justice for the dead would put the matter to rest.

This is just as the state Commissioner of Police, Edgal Imohimi, ordered that Olonade should be tried posthumously and dismissed from the police force.

PUNCH *Metro* had reported on Thursday that 46-year-old Adeyemo stopped the police inspector after he allegedly contravened the state traffic law while driving a Toyota Highlander SUV.

The F-SARS operative was said to have kicked against the LASTMA official's action and had an altercation with him.

In a fit of rage, Olonade allegedly went into his vehicle and brought out a gun with which he shot Adeyemo in the head.

The suspect, who was in mufti at the time, was reportedly mobbed by residents and passersby, who beat him up before he was handed over to the police.

Adeyemo was rushed to a hospital where he was confirmed dead.

The police spokesperson in Lagos State, CSP Chike Oti, in a statement on Thursday, said the F-SARS operative also died from the beating he got from the irate mob, who mistook him for an armed hoodlum.

He added that the corpses of the two men were deposited in an unnamed morgue.

Oti stated that although the inspector was dead, the CP had ordered his trial in an orderly room and recommended that he should be dismissed from the force.

But a LASTMA officer, who asked not to be named, said the claim that Olonade too died was doubtful.

“We were the ones who took him to the police station. He was alive and okay as of the time we took him there. So, how did he die? Did the police beat him as well?” he queried.

Another LASTMA official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, asked the police to provide evidence of the F-SARS operative's death.

He said, “There is something fishy somewhere; they may be hiding something. The police should provide evidence that the policeman is indeed dead. It is premature for the CP to say the guy should

be tried posthumously. They should first convince the public that he is dead.

“The incident has affected our men; they are afraid. It is one of the problems we are currently facing on Lagos roads. The violators of the state traffic laws are mostly uniformed men. They are the ones driving unlicensed and unpainted vehicles.

“Most times when they are apprehended, all they do is to display the paraphernalia of their professions and that make them to be above the law. They can even drive against traffic on the Third Mainland Bridge and nobody dares to question them.

“If you try to talk, they will first show you their ID cards. If you ask them to turn back from the wrong route, they will then show you their guns. That is part of the crisis we are facing on the roads. Our men cannot perform if they don't have the confidence and the protection of the police; if they are being intimidated, harassed and killed by the people who should protect them, how do you expect them to function effectively?”

The Public Affairs Officer of LASTMA, Mahmud Hassan, said some officials of the agency had already visited the family of the deceased.

He added that another delegation to be led by the Chief Executive Officer, Chris Olakpe, and the General Manager, Olawale Musa, would visit the family today (Friday).

Hassan stated, “For the police, the ball is now in their court. They are the ones with the power to conduct investigation. But all eyes are on them to ensure that justice is done. The deceased's family and the entire members of the public are waiting for justice.

“There, is however, the need for uniformed men, especially the police and soldiers, to cooperate with our men on the road. They should stop harassing our men. They should be examples to other road users.”

Oti, however, insisted that the killer cop was dead.

He said, “It is true that the policeman is dead. In the statement we issued, we stated that even his dead body would stand trial and he will be dismissed posthumously, because it is confirmed that the

LASTMA official died from the shot he fired.

“The implication is that when he is dismissed, his family will not collect any death benefit from the government and he will not be buried like a policeman. So, what could be worse than that? The policeman was beaten and people saw that he was almost dead before he was picked up.

“In fact, he died before the LASTMA official. Before we issued a statement on the incident, he was already dead, while the LASTMA official was still in a critical condition.”

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Contact: theeditor@punchng.com