

Drivers block Kaduna-Abuja Highway as police kill colleague

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Travellers stranded on the Kaduna-Abuja Highway as motorists protested the alleged killing of a commercial bus driver by policemen... on Friday. Photo: NAN

Godwin Isenyo with agency report

Hundreds of passengers were reportedly stranded on the Abuja-Kaduna Highway on Friday as articulated vehicle drivers blocked the road in protest against the killing of a bus driver by a policeman on the road after he allegedly refused to part with a N2,000 bribe.

Eyewitnesses told the *News Agency of Nigeria* that the Peugeot J5 driver was shot around midnight at a checkpoint near OLAM Flour Mill, Kaduna.

The driver was allegedly transporting smuggled rice to an unknown destination when police stopped him at the checkpoint and demanded a bribe from him to let him go.

It was learnt that a female truck driver, who was the first to arrive at the scene of the killing, blocked her lane while other drivers joined and blocked the other lane.

The development caused a huge traffic jam on the highway.

The drivers insisted that they would not remove their vehicles until Kaduna State Governor, Nasir el-Rufai, and the state Commissioner of Police, Ali Janga, addressed them.

However, some of the passengers condemned the killing of the driver and the decision of the truck drivers to block the road.

“They shouldn’t have taken this measure considering Eid-el-Kabir is just two days from today,” a passenger, Musa Garba, who was travelling to Enugu, said.

All efforts by some soldiers to open the road failed as the aggrieved drivers refused to cooperate.

In a statement, the state government, through its Commissioner for Internal Security and Home Affairs, Mr Samuel Aruwan, described the killing of the driver as “unfortunate,” demanding the state Commissioner of Police, Ali Janga, launch an investigation into the incident.

Aruwan said, “The Kaduna State Government commiserates with the family of the deceased driver and has directed the police to thoroughly investigate the incident.

“However, grief and a sense of loss do not justify imposing such pains on other citizens as the protesting drivers have done by blocking a very busy highway. They have left many people stranded for several hours and caused considerable distress.”

In a statement by spokesman for the police in the state, DSP Yakubu Sabo, the CP said the officer who killed the driver would face trial.

The statement said, “The CP has already defaulted the NCO involved in the incident as a preliminary disciplinary measure and he will be tried accordingly.