

Family kicks as man guarding telecommunications mast dies

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• Scene of the incident Photo: Deji Lambo

Deji Lambo

The family of a security guard, Wasiu Olaide, who died on the site of a telecommunications mast belonging to Globacom in the Alapere area of Lagos State, has demanded justice for his death.

PUNCH Metro gathered that Wasiu was one of the security guards watching over the mast located at No. 7 Ademolu Adefuye Street, Alapere.

Until Wasiu's death, it was learnt that he was operating as a commercial motorcyclist during the day and as a guard in the employment of Proserve Security to secure the mast at night.

When *PUNCH Metro* visited the scene of the incident, residents, who witnessed Wasiu's last moments, gave two accounts of the circumstances surrounding his death.

Some said the Osun State indigene's death resulted from the health hazard of dwelling in the telecommunication mast's security post.

The other account explained that Wasiu, who was fond of taking alcohol, got intoxicated at a party in the area and the alcohol adversely affected him and compounded an illness he had been nursing, which eventually led to his death.

A resident of the area, who identified herself simply as Bolanle, said Wasiu was struggling to stay alive as he lay naked on the floor of the security post, where the mast is located.

She stated, "It was when I got back from church that I was informed that Wasiu had died. People met him naked where he usually slept. When the people were still in doubt of his state, members of a church located very close to the mast told residents to bring him to the church for prayer, because what happened was strange and sudden.

"He was not supposed to be sleeping where the mast is, because of the health implications, but he lived there and was the only one there; if there had been a helping hand, he probably would have survived."

Wasiu's guarantor, Ademolu Adefuye, said he died while efforts were being made to rescue him, adding that his remains were evacuated and deposited in the morgue of the Ikorodu General Hospital.

Adefuye stated, "Wasiu got himself intoxicated at a party in the area. The following day, I went to work but learnt that he never stepped out of the security post on Monday and Tuesday; so, on Wednesday, when we got to the security post, we saw him naked and observed that he was shivering.

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"I was the one who went to the shop of the security guard on the morning shift to inform her about the situation, and that was when she informed the head office about Wasiu's condition. We were busy trying to get a vehicle to convey him to hospital when he died. Later on, people came from the

head office in the night, evacuated his corpse and deposited it in the Ikorodu General Hospital's mortuary.

“We had been advising him to stop drinking but he never listened; we also told him to rent a place to stay, but he refused and preferred to sleep in the security post and during the day, he used his motorcycle for commercial purposes.”

When contacted, Wasiu's elder brother, Lukmon, said members of the family would visit the Ikorodu General Hospital on Tuesday to retrieve his remains for burial in Ikirun, Osun State, adding that despite his brother's death in active duty, his employer had abandoned the family.

He said, “People in the area, where he stayed, informed us about what happened; they said he died of illness and that his remains had been taken to the mortuary. We paid a motorist N35,000 to convey his remains to our home town in Ikirun, but when we got to Lagos on Friday and went to the mortuary on Saturday, we could not retrieve his corpse from the mortuary because it was a weekend.

“We were told to come back on Monday with a national identification card and N11,000. We have not heard anything from the company he worked for. Everyone was scared of talking when we got to the location of the mast; his death still feels strange to us and we want justice.”

One Tony, who spoke on behalf of Proserve Security, refuted the claim that Wasiu was abandoned, saying the firm had initiated contact with the guarantor and had been waiting for the next-of-the-kin to show up for documentation.

The state Police Public Relations Officer, Bala Elkana, said the case was being treated as a sudden and unnatural death, adding that Wasiu died after a brief illness.

“One Rufai Jasper reported to us that on December 11, 2019, Wasiu Olaide, a security guard at a Globacom mast site on No. 7 Ademolu Adefuye Street, Alapere Ketu, Lagos, died after a brief illness. The scene of the incident was visited and the corpse evacuated and deposited in the Ikorodu General Hospital's mortuary for autopsy. An investigation is ongoing,” Elkana stated.