

Police refuse to arrest Ogun okada riders who hacked my husband to death –Automobile engineer's widow

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Not long ago, the Lagos State Government banned commercial motorcyclists (Okada riders) from operating in some parts of the state and most of them have relocated to Ogun State. But a few weeks after they landed in Ogun State, some of them stabbed an automobile engineer, Giwa Olaojo, to death. In this interview with DAUD OLATUNJI, his 46-year-old widow, Funke, explains how the late Giwa was stabbed to death in Sango

What was your husband's occupation?

My husband was an automobile engineer. He was 48 years and I am 46 years old.

What led to his death and how did you feel when you received the sad news?

I was not feeling good at all, even till this moment, I am still not feeling alright. My husband died some days ago and since that day, I have not been feeling right about myself.

That day was on Saturday. I left him at home for my own shop. Some hours later, he called to inform me that he wanted to attend the burial of one his colleagues at their workshop around Dalemo area of Ogun State. Then, he went straight to the place after our conversation.

When he arrived from the ceremony, I was not back from the shop. Only our last child was at home. Then he told their father that I had yet to come back from the shop. Their father then told him that he wanted to quickly go and drop his friends that followed him to the burial at the bus stop.

I arrived few minutes after he left with his friends to the bus stop. Immediately, I called him on phone to ask where he was, he told me he was on his way home. He was even asking me if I had prepared his meal. Before I left for shop, he told me that he wanted to eat *Ogunfe* (goat meat) soup with *Semo* and I promised him we would eat that meal in the night.

During our conversation on the phone, he asked if I had prepared the meal and I told him that it was almost ready. Before we ended the call, he told me to call him back as soon as the meal was ready.

When the meal was ready, I set the table, arranged everything in anticipation of his arrival. I called him countless times but he didn't pick my calls again. When it was almost 9pm that I couldn't reach him, I became worried and confused.

Suddenly, one of my cousins called me on the phone. She was asking if I was still at shop or at home. I told her that I was at home waiting for my husband. I was still

confused and worried because it was unusual of him.

Few minutes after my cousin called, an unknown person called me again, what I only heard from the conversation was that Giwa had been killed. I rushed out immediately to check if it was my own Giwa they were talking about. I was crying for help before all my neighbours came outside that night. While they were consoling me, my cousin arrived to break the news of my husband's death to me. She did not even know what to say. She was stammering but I heard her saying the incident happened at Lafenwa that my husband's car collided with a motorcycle and the motorcyclist was injured.

She further said motorcyclists in the area pounced on him. In that process, people were trying to settle the rift between them but suddenly some Hausa motorcyclists just came with machetes. Before they knew what was going on, the Hausa motorcyclists had started inflicting matchete cuts on my husband. They stabbed him to death.

My husband was killed in Sango-Ota by a horde of Hausa motorcycle riders.

What steps have you taken?

That day was not good for me at all. When they brought his corpse home, I told them to take the remains to the mortuary. I told our family members and friends to lodge a complaint at the police station. They went to Itele Police Station but as we speak they have yet to do anything about it. The police told us that some people had come to report the same issue. Since then we have not heard anything from them.

I was also told that some media organisations have also reported it. With all the reports I heard, the police have yet to arrest anybody in connection with my husband's death.

Who are you blaming for your husband's death?

The Hausa *okada* riders inflicted machete cuts on my husband and killed him in the process. In a case like this, people will rush to the police station to complain. Do you believe that with all the complaints at the police station in Itele, the police are still telling us that they have not arrested anybody in connection with my husband's murder?

My husband did not kill anybody. He only hit a motorcyclist by mistake with little injury which anybody can commit. Moreover, the motorcyclist was not really injured. His leg was not broken, he was completely okay. But his Hausa colleagues attacked my husband and killed him. Well, I believe something is hidden about the death of my husband.

Did you plan to go to court?

I do not have the financial strength to file any case in court. My husband is dead; I do not have anybody again. I only look up to God for survival.

What did you want from the government?

I am pleading with the government to assist me in searching for the killers of my husband.

What I want from the government is to help me investigate the death of my husband. I want to know the killers of my husband. I want to know if some people were hired to kill my husband.

I want the government to retrieve my husband's car for me. His vehicle has been destroyed. It was towed to Itele Police Station.

Imagine, the police were even requesting money from us when they wanted to tow the destroyed vehicle from the scene to Itele Police Station. They told us to pay N15,000 for the towing fee.

How many children did he leave behind?

We had three children. Our first daughter, Odunola Olaojo, just finished her final HND examination at the Computer Science Department of the Moshood Abiola Polytechnic, Abeokuta. She is still waiting to be mobilised for the National Youth Service Corps.

Our second child, Femi Olaojo, just secured admission into a university in Delta State.

The third child, Boluwatife Olaojo, is a secondary school student. He is currently in JSS2 at the Upright Secondary School, Ogun State.

Our plan for them is to acquire education to whatever level they want. We want them to be educationally sound.

Before the demise of my husband, he usually told me that his children's education was his priority. I cannot take care of them alone. Looking at the plans, I do not have the financial strength. I will be glad if the government can also assist me in terms of the education of my children. My first daughter that just graduated should be given a befitting job.

Before the incident have you had any problem with the Hausa motorcyclists in the community?

I have never had any issue with them. Even they used to seat in front of my shop. I used to give them food.

Did your husband join politics?

He has never been into politics. He was only elected as the chairman of the mechanics association in his workshop. He spent four years as chairman of the association and handed over the position about three years ago.

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