

METRO PLUS

Security guard kills Lagos driver with tear gas

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A security guard, Festus Owoha, has been arrested by the Lagos State Police Command for allegedly using tear gas to kill a commercial driver, Kusum Adeoti, in the Apapa area of the state.

PUNCH Metro gathered that Kusum used his bus to convey some passengers, including a yet-to-be-identified policeman, to Apapa from Ojuelegba, but when they got to their destination in the Wharf area of Apapa, an argument ensued between the policeman and Kusum over N500 that was found in the vehicle.

During the argument, it was learnt that Kusum and the policeman swore to an oath after which the money was released to the cop.

However, the policeman returned the money to Kusum and left abruptly, but Festus, who was said to have been observing the situation, suddenly accosted the driver and questioned him for arguing with a cop.

Kusum's younger brother, Irawo, said eyewitnesses at the scene of the incident told him that his brother told Festus that he had no business in the matter.

The 51-year-old said Festus became annoyed and allegedly sprayed tear gas in Kusum's face. The driver, he said, fell to the ground, adding that the father of four died while being rushed to a nearby hospital for treatment on Sunday, May 10, 2020.

Irawo stated, "I received a call that Kusum was arguing with a policeman and the policeman killed him in the process. So, I called some of our relatives, whose houses were closer to the scene of the incident, and I met them there and identified his corpse. What we gathered from eyewitnesses was that my brother conveyed passengers, including a policeman, to Apapa from Ojuelegba.

"When they got to the bus stop in Apapa, the passengers alighted and N500 fell inside the vehicle. My brother picked the money but the policeman claimed ownership of the money and they started arguing. Later, my brother insisted that they should both take an oath, which they both swore to and my brother gave him the money. Surprisingly, I was told that the policeman later returned the money to Kusum and left.

"Suddenly, another man, who eyewitnesses said was a policeman and was not involved in the argument, accosted Kusum for having the effrontery to argue with the policeman, who had left. My brother told him that he had no business in the matter and they started arguing.

"During the argument, my brother opened the door of his car to pick something, but in the process, the other man sprayed tear gas in his face. My brother became weak immediately and fell to the ground.

"People at the park noticed that something was wrong with him and quickly rushed him to hospital, but he died on the way. So, people held on to the man and handed him over to policemen from the Apapa Police Station. We want the police authorities to release the corpse of my brother for burial."

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The deceased's wife, Shakirat, said Kusum just got the vehicle and had not used it for up to a month when he died.

Shakirat stated, "I was at home when his relatives informed me that he was killed by a policeman, who sprayed tear gas in his face. He had not used that bus for up to a month when the incident that claimed his life happened.

"I want the government and concerned citizens to help us, because living has been difficult for us. I am pregnant and have four children to take care of."

When contacted, the Police Public Relations Officer in the state, Bala Elkana, said Festus had been arrested, adding that the case had been transferred to the State Criminal Investigation and Intelligence Department, Pantí, Yaba, for further investigation.

Elkana stated, "One Taofeek Oladipo reported the incident at the Apapa Police Division and based on the report we got, the security guard, Festus Owoha, who works with a private security firm, was arrested. He was said to be arguing with the driver over the N500 that they found on the ground.

"That was the genesis of the argument, according to information we got from eyewitnesses; Festus then sprayed what looks like a chemical mess in his eyes and Kusum slumped and died.

"The suspect was arrested and the case has been transferred to the SCIID, Pantí, Yaba. He is facing a charge of murder. He is not a policeman; he is a civilian. Investigation is ongoing."