

**METRO PLUS**

# Niger police kill tiler who rescued thief from mob

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Vincent Emmanuel

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The police in Niger State have allegedly shot dead a tiler, Vincent Emmanuel, during a mob action in the Gwazunu area of the state.

Our correspondent gathered that a suspected thief was apprehended on Sunday by some residents, who attempted to lynch him.

However, the 29-year-old Vincent, who was passing by at the time, prevailed on the mob not to take the law into their hands.

He was said to have told them to hand over the suspect to the police, but on getting to the police outpost in Gwazunu, the cops chased the crowd away without finding out the reason for their visit.

The victim's sister-in-law, who identified herself simply as Mama Ojo, said one of the policemen opened fire on the crowd and Vincent was hit by a bullet.

She alleged that the police refused to release Vincent's corpse to the family for burial.

She said, "Vincent told me that he wanted to go and watch football and in the evening as I was coming back from somewhere, I saw him on the way and I disembarked from the vehicle and we trekked together.

"When we got to the Snooker Board area, we saw some of the people, who were playing football beating a man. They said Kadaka people came to steal someone's phone.

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"According to them, three people came to steal, but two escaped and the one apprehended was beaten by the mob. When we saw that, I told Vincent that we should go, but he said the mob could kill the suspect, so he approached them that they should not take the law into their hands, but instead hand him over to the police.

"He took the suspect alongside the footballers to the police, while I was waiting for him outside; but as they were entering the station, the police told them to go back, but they stayed put at the entrance to the station; as my brother-in-law moved to turn back, one of the policemen just shot him and he fell down on the spot.

"Later, some policemen drove into the station and started shooting indiscriminately. They put him in their vehicle and drove off, while shooting in the air. We reported the matter at the 'B' Division Police Station, but we have not been allowed to see his corpse. We were told to go and that they would call us, but till date, we have not seen his corpse nor heard anything from the police."

However, the state Police Public Relations Officer, Wasiu Abiodun, claimed in a statement that the victim was shot dead by the mob.

He added that the state Commissioner of Police, Adamu Usman, had ordered that the case be transferred to the State Criminal Investigation Department, Minna, for thorough investigation.

The statement read in part, “On June 2, 2020, around 5.20pm, there was an attack by some Gauraka youths in the Gwazunu area of the Suleja LGA during a football match against the regulations of social distancing, wearing of face mask, washing of hands and using of hand sanitizer to contain the spread of COVID-19 in the state, which led to the loss of a mobile phone by one of the Gauraka youth.

“In an attempt to avenge the attack and loss of the phone, on June 7, 2020, around 7.20pm, the Gauraka youth invaded Gwazunu and one Nura Musa of Angwan Almajiri Gauraka in the Tafa LGA was arrested by vigilante members at Gwazunu for mobilising hoodlums, known as *Sara-Suka*, to cause a breach of the peace in the area and he was taken to the Gwazunu Police Outpost.

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“Some youths in large numbers quickly mobilised, armed with weapons such as cutlasses, stones, sticks, garrotte and Dane gun, with intent to lynch the suspect, and caused pandemonium and disagreement among the crowd; a gunshot was fired from the mob, which caused one Vincent Alabi of Gwazunu area to sustain an injury.

“He was pronounced dead on arrival at the hospital. During the physical examination of the corpse, it was discovered that there was a bullet wound on his forehead, which was suspected to be from the earlier shooting.

“However, the Commissioner of Police, Adamu Usman, has ordered thorough investigation into the incident and directed that the case be transferred to the SCID, Minna, while patrol has been intensified in the area to ensure the safety of lives and property, and to forestall any breach of the public peace.”