

INTERVIEW

# My brother's death clear case of negligence by Abuja Disco — Sibling of Nasarawa varsity graduate electrocuted by high tension wire

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Iliyasu Haruna and late Zaidu Haruna

*Iliyasu Haruna is the elder brother to the late Zaidu Haruna, the Nasarawa State University, Keffi, graduate who was electrocuted by a high tension wire that fell in the Keffi Local Government Area of the state on August 19, 2020. He tells UMAR MUHAMMED that the Abuja Electricity Distribution Company's negligence was responsible for Zaidu's death*

*Can you identify yourself?*

My name is Haruna Shu'aibu Iliyasu. I hail from the Awe Local Government Area of Nasarawa State. I am a lawyer by profession.

***Who was the deceased to you?***

He was my younger brother, from the same parents, and he lived in Keffi with me. He was 29 years old.

***Was he married?***

He was not married.

***What was your brother studying before he died?***

He completed his bachelor's degree in Biology Education. He had also applied to start another degree in Computer Science.

***How did he die?***

He was working in the GSM Village as one of their technicians. He fixed laptops, iPad as well as mobile phones. So, he went there on Monday morning (August 19, 2020). On arrival, he brought some of his tools and kept them on the table and even brought what to eat and dropped it on the table then he went to get his bag where he normally kept his tools. It was on his way out, that he was electrocuted by a fallen high tension wire that he came in contact with.

***He was said to have died while trying to rescue another person. How true is that?***

I am telling you that the information was wrong. He wasn't trying to rescue anybody. He was the one who was electrocuted and then one of his colleagues attempted to rescue him and the power then flung his colleague. But that one survived. Nothing happened to him. So, the second person that died was a passerby who was not

working there with them. He stood there watching what happened before the high tension wire fell. That was how he also died. So, my brother, Zaidu, was not there on any rescue mission. He was the one who was directly electrocuted.

***How would you describe your late brother?***

My late brother was a very cool-headed young, vibrant, ambitious and an energetic young man who was always obedient. We hardly saw him frowning. God made him strong but he never used that against others. He was peaceful, loving and admired by all so much that the news of his demise came as a shock to everyone. He was also helpful to his younger ones and even the older ones who are not working at the moment. He stayed with me and was helpful and supportive, especially to the family and our aged mother.

***Are your parents alive?***

Both our father and mother are alive.

***How did they react when they heard about the incident?***

My mother actually fainted twice. It was later when she regained her consciousness that she was told what happened. She is still in shock, but my father, who was much stronger, has accepted that death is from God and every soul must face death.

***What did you or the community do when the incident occurred?***

We informed the Abuja Electricity Distribution Company that their fallen wire had actually caused the death of our brother and some of their personnel were there to condole with the family. They even came to Keffi where I stay to sympathise with me. His death was caused by a fallen high tension wire which fell a day before the incident occurred. On whether his death could have been avoided, only God can say. But if that high tension wire had been fixed immediately it fell, probably, nothing of such would

have happened. But like people of faith, it is what God has written on how and when one is going to die that is his fate.

***People blamed the electricity company for your brother's death. Do you agree with them?***

The fact remains that if that electric wire was in good shape, there would not have been any reason for such incident. But it happened that the wire fell and nobody was there as and when due, and unfortunately, he (Zaidu) was the one affected by the negligence. It is a clear case of negligence, because for a high tension wire to fall like that, there must be a signal from the control room or where they have their power hub that shows that there is a problem somewhere. So, if that had been done, it (electrocution) might have been averted.

***What did the representatives of the company say when they met with your family?***

They told me that they would also want to meet with the parents. So, they went to Lafia where they met with my father and mother as well as some of our extended family members who were there.

***How does your family want the case addressed?***

I am not in the position to say because my father is still alive and he received them in good spirit. The company condoled with us and they all left without saying anything. So, we will want to overcome the shock in our hearts before thinking about anything, if there is going to be a reaction in any other way. But what is more painful to us at the moment is the fact that we have lost a very dear brother and we don't want to make any comment now that we are still in grief.

***Is it true your family has already concluded arrangements to sue the company?***

That cannot be true. Nobody has decided that. I am a legal practitioner and we have not made such a decision because these are people who actually came around to show remorse that they were not particularly happy about the incident. They have condoled with the family. They told us that they would report to their superiors and get back to us. So, why should we conclude arrangements to go to court? Nobody will wish to kill another. If it happens accidentally or through negligence, at least, it should be discussed before resorting to any litigation or legal action.

***What is your call on the state government and the company with regards to averting future occurrence?***

I am a human rights activist and everybody has his or her own right to life. So, someone's negligence should not end the life of an individual. So, my call to them is that prompt actions should always be taken. For instance, if you have a fallen wire, it should be fixed even before people notice because most of the time, the fixing always comes when the damage has been done, just like the incident that led to the death of my brother. The duty of the Abuja Electricity Distribution Company is to fix all at all times. They should go round and deploy their members of staff to ensure that those things are fixed. My call on the government also is that since the Abuja Electricity Distribution Company is a private company, they should have a supervisory/regulatory body that will impose sanctions on those who neglect certain important things that could result in the loss of life.

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