

Mother, siblings mourn, lament death of Ekiti man slain by ‘drunk policeman’

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Relations of 31-year-old Abayomi Olaoye, who was allegedly killed at a hotel in Ado Ekiti, Ekiti State following the negligence of a policeman, are calling for justice for the deceased, whom they described as their breadwinner. ABIODUN NEJO writes

Saturday, November 21, 2020 was like any other day for 31-year-old Abayomi Olaoye. He was bubbly, vibrant and full of life unknown to him and his loved ones that a fatal and cruel fate awaited him in the hands of a policeman.

On that fateful day, Yomi or Kush, as he was fondly called, who was into CCTV installations, made brisk appearances at a few places, including a wedding— an appearance that people have termed as his way of bidding goodbye to relations, friends and acquaintances.

His 55-year-old mother, Mrs Yetunde Olaoye, left distraught by the premature death of her eldest son, was inconsolable during our correspondent's visit to their home. She could not stop muttering his last words to her, barely coherent: I will soon be back. She said Yomi was at her shop earlier that day and had promised to return in the evening for supper.

She was worried when she didn't see him and couldn't reach him on the phone, until a call around 11pm through which she heard the sad news about her son left her gasping for breath. She was told that her son had been killed by a policeman.

With teary eyes, the bereaved mother said, "The last time I saw him was that Saturday. Around 5.30pm, he came to my shop. He wore a yellow T-shirt and a pair of jean trousers. He said 'Iya Tobi', as he fondly called me, using the name of his younger sibling, 'please, help me to keep this pair of shoes at home, I will soon be back.

"He asked for his daughter, Elizabeth, and I said she was somewhere in the compound. He went to carry the baby and played with her. Later, he returned the baby to me and left. He said, 'I will soon be back' but I never saw him. Surprisingly, I was called around 11pm and told my son had been killed."

Olaoye had to be taken to the hospital on Monday as she had not slept or eaten since she heard about her son's death and her relations feared

that the loss might affect her health if medical attention was not sought.

She described Yomi as the breadwinner of the family and its pillar of support. According to her, Yomi always looked after the wellness, well-being and happiness of all members of the family.

“He was the one fending for me; his daughter, who is less than two years old, and his siblings.

“He built this house for me so that I would stop suffering. He organised a birthday party for me earlier this month to celebrate me. Since the mother of his baby abandoned the child when she was about one month and two weeks old, I have been the one taking care of her. Yomi made sure the baby never lacked anything.

“Yomi said repeatedly that he would sponsor the girl (Elizabeth) to wherever she would want to get to in life. He said he would give the baby the very best even if he didn’t have a wife. She has started nursery education. The policeman that shortened his life has taken someone precious to me. There is nothing I have to say.

“When they told me that a policeman shot my son dead, I was dumbfounded and confused. This was not Yomi’s plan for me and the family. It is a thing of sorrow. It is sadness. His father died less than two years ago. The killer also killed me.

“The killer-policeman also took my honour from me. He took away my crown of glory. The killer-policeman did not allow Yomi live to care for his child and be taken care of in return. I leave the person in God’s court.”

Olaoye, however, said since Yomi's life had been taken already, the focus now should be how to give his daughter a meaningful life. She appealed to the government to "take pity on Elizabeth so that Yomi's dream for the baby girl will be realised and so that the girl does not suffer".

"I cannot fend for the baby alone; the girl needs help," she said.

"The government should consider the girl and assist her. Yomi should not die in vain. Yomi's death should not be like that of a common goat and Elizabeth's needs should be taken care of.

"I have left the fight for God. It is only God that can take justice to the killer. If I say that whoever kills should be killed; even if the killer-policeman is killed, will that bring back my son? No, it can't bring him back. I leave him in God's court. I pray for God's protection over Yomi's daughter and my remaining children."

Yomi's immediate younger sister, Mrs Oluwafunke Olaoye-Sanusi, said, "We want justice for Abayomi, which is that his daughter should not suffer. Elizabeth is still very young; she is not even two years old yet. The government should help us so that the girl does not suffer.

"Abayomi's plan was that once Elizabeth turns 12, she and my mum would travel out of the country. Now, who will fulfil that promise? I want the government to ensure that justice is done in this matter so that my brother will not die in vain. I know if they kill the police officer involved, it cannot bring my brother back to life. Our concern is how the child he left behind, his mum, and younger siblings that he was taking care of will not feel the impact of the vacuum his death has created."

Olaoye-Sanusi recalled how she had joked with his late brother about the profile picture on his Whatsapp page, which was a picture he had taken at the last wedding he attended with a man known as Poker, who was also shot alongside Yomi.

Olaoye Sanusi added, “I was in Lagos when it happened. It was around 11pm that we got a phone call from someone that Abayomi had an accident. Immediately, I called his phone line but it was switched off. I called Poker’s number and a lady picked it up and said some police officers were at a hotel where Yomi and Poker were taking pepper soup.

“She said the policemen were probably drunk because someone who was not drunk could not have left his gun carelessly. The policeman killed my brother and took the breadwinner of the family away from us.

“During the recent #EndSARS protests, Yomi also protested. He carried a placard, saying, ‘Say no to police brutality’ during the peaceful #EndSARS protest in Ado Ekiti. The same police killed him one month later. Everybody knew him as a peace-loving person.”

The deceased’s cousin, Kayode Osho, who shed more light on how Yomi was killed, said, “Around 8.30pm on November 21, he left my shop at Dallimore area for the hotel where an allegedly drunk policeman shot him and his friend.

“According to an eyewitness, the policemen were drunk. As they got there, one of them did not have his rifle in safe mode. He said the policeman just left the gun facing down. That was how the gun went off, hitting my cousin in the stomach and the other person in the leg.

“When it happened, everybody scampered to safety, but when they returned there to rescue him, he had lost a lot of blood. So he was dead before they were able to get him to the hospital.

“The eyewitness said when the gun went off, the policeman, because he was drunk, did not believe Yomi had been hit by a bullet. The policeman said Yomi must have been in shock and would soon recover. Also, the distance between where the incident happened, which is on the outskirts of Ado Ekiti and Ekiti State University Teaching Hospital, where he was taken to, was too far.”

According to him, the other person hit by a bullet has been operated upon and is in a stable condition.

The policeman allegedly responsible for Yomi’s death, along with other cops, were said to have been providing protection for a retired senior police officer who was on a mission to Ekiti State that weekend.

The Police Public Relations Officer of Ekiti State Command, Sunday Abutu, who confirmed the incident, said the policeman identified to have caused Yomi’s death had been arrested and detained at the Police Headquarters in Ado Ekiti.

Abutu, however, added that the policeman and his colleagues allegedly responsible for the incident were not from the Ekiti Police Command.

“The Commissioner of Police, Tunde Mobayo, has ordered a thorough investigation into the shooting and we have commenced that.

“We have been able to establish that there was a shooting on Saturday evening at one hotel in Ado Ekiti. Two persons were hit and one has died while the second man is receiving treatment in the hospital. The corpse of the deceased has been taken to a morgue.

“The policeman responsible for it has been arrested and he is now in our custody. Though those involved are not from our command, the incident is within our jurisdiction and we have promised that whoever is found culpable will be prosecuted accordingly,” Abutu said.

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