

# My husband died in SARS detention over N200 airtime – Widow

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There was a shock at the Judicial Panel of Enquiry sitting in Abeokuta the Ogun State capital on Monday, when a widow, Adebimpe Sobowale, narrated how she was tortured and detained for four days despite being pregnant.

She also told the panel that, her husband, Mr. Sobowale was killed in police detention over N200 airtime allegedly traced to her phone.

Sobowale said this while defending a petition filed against the operatives of the disbanded Special Anti Robbery Squad Zonal Intervention in the state.

The widow said she was three months pregnant on February 8, 2020, when the operatives reportedly stormed her residence at night and arrested her over alleged fraud committed with her SIM card.

She said she was arrested on Feb. 8, 2020, and taken to a holding cell in the station where she was detained and tortured “with something like electric touch.”

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She said, “They used the thing, which was plugged to an electric socket to shock me, and asked me to write whatever they dictated to me as a statement. They said I belonged to a gang of fraudsters.

“They said my SIM card was used to collect N200 recharge. They said they tracked it at Zain (Airtel) office and it brought my picture.

“I told them I don’t know what they were talking about and I refused to implicate myself in the statement. They arrested my husband on Feb. 10 and released me the next day.

“Some days later, I was informed that my husband had died in detention.”

Sobowale said she was picked by three SARS officers but she could only identify two of them and she recalled that one of them was called Inspector Apiah Moses.

She said she was released after spending four days in detention when her husband reported at the police station.

The widow said few days after the husband was taken into custody in her stead, she received a call that her husband had died in the custody.

She had a son before her arrest and the pregnancy had produced another baby boy. She brought both of them before the panel.

When called to testify in the case, one Mr. Ojo Friday, explained his efforts in securing bail for Mrs. Sobowale.

He said, “When I got to the SARS ZIS three days after she was arrested, I met the officer in charge , Mr. Megbope and explained that a woman was being detained here. He expressed surprise. It was then that the IPO came in to brief him.

“I expressed my displeasure to the OC, I said ‘somebody is being locked up here for the past three days and he is not aware’, he was not pleased with my statement and he asked me to go out.”

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Friday further explained that the Officer-in-Charge later assured him that the woman would be released once the husband was apprehended.

“The husband showed up on Feb. 10 and the woman was released the next day, while the husband was held in detention. About three or four days after, I heard that the husband had died.”

The case was adjourned till February 4, 2021, while the respondents were asked to produce Inspector Apiah Moses and the alleged defrauded woman.