

Soldiers shoot motorcyclist dead during operation with NDLEA operatives

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L-R, Abdullahi, COAS, Msj. Gen. Attahiru

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A motorcyclist, Babangida Abdullahi, has been shot dead by soldiers attached to the 174 Battalion Army Barracks during a joint raid with operatives of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency at the Flower Market, Ikorodu North Local Council Development Area of Lagos State.

PUNCH Metro gathered that Abdullahi and one of his friends, Saminu, were inside a shanty in the market when no fewer than six armed NDLEA operatives and two armed soldiers stormed the market around 6.15pm last Tuesday.

It was learnt that the presence of the NDLEA operatives and soldiers sent shivers down the spines of traders, customers in the market as well as residents of the area, and they ran helter-skelter.

Speaking with *PUNCH Metro* during a visit to the market on Sunday, Saminu said he was in the shanty with Abdullahi when the law enforcement agents raided the market, adding that while he and other persons were running for safety, Abdullahi was unlucky as one of the soldiers allegedly shot him.

He said, “Six armed NDLEA operatives and two armed soldiers were involved in the raid. They came in their patrol vehicles and parked at a location in the market and moved in on their target. I was inside the shanty with Abdullahi when people started running. I rushed out and saw the situation and also ran for safety.

“One of the soldiers shot at the shanty, where Abdullahi was, twice and a bullet penetrated the wood and hit him in his rib. Immediately they saw that the bullet had hit Abdullahi, they retracted and fled. We quickly came back to Abdullahi and rushed him to a nearby hospital, but he unfortunately died on the way. He was a commercial motorcyclist like me.”

During a visit to the Seriki of the Hausa community in the market, his Personal Assistant, Ali Ahmed, said Abdullahi was killed in the same month he had planned his traditional marriage, adding that he just returned from his hometown a few days after concluding plans for the wedding.

Ahmed told our correspondent, “Our Seriki is currently not around. All of us were here in the office when we suddenly observed that people were running; we suddenly heard the sound of gunshots. We became worried and someone told us that Abdullahi had been shot.

“We proceeded to the scene of the incident, but didn’t see any of the NDLEA operatives and soldiers there. They left immediately they realised that they had killed someone, but we saw some of the eyewitnesses carrying Abdullahi to hospital.

“When we asked them what happened, they told us that operatives of the NDLEA and soldiers perpetrated the act. Before we got to the hospital with Abdullahi, he had died. The bullet hit him in his rib; we really don’t know what he did for them to have shot him. He was killed four days after

he returned from his hometown to conclude plans for his traditional marriage. We were unaware of the raid until we saw people running.”

When contacted, the spokesman for the NDLEA, Femi Babafemi, said the raid was a joint operation involving another security agency, adding that none of the NDLEA officials involved in the raid fired the shots that killed Abdullahi.

“The operation was a joint one, but the men of the NDLEA never killed anybody. It was an officer of another security agency involved in the joint operation that fired the shot and the agency involved has already handled the matter and I am aware that the victim has been buried. Even though the NDLEA was involved in the operation, the person was not killed by any of our men,” Babafemi stated.

The spokesman for the 81 Division Nigeria Army, Major Olaniyi Osoba, said, “The appropriate department will investigate the matter and we will let you know the outcome, because this matter requires investigation as there are a lot of things we don’t understand now, but the outcome of the investigation will determine everything. So, give us some time for investigation on the subject matter.”