

Army probes alleged murder of businesswoman caught with N1.7m by soldiers

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Brig.-Gen. Mohammed Yerima

The Nigerian Army said on Wednesday that it had begun investigation into the alleged involvement of its personnel in the extortion and murder of a businesswoman in Katsina State.

A statement by the Director of Army Public Relations, Brig. Gen. Mohammed Yerima, dated May 25, 2021, but made available to journalists in Katsina on Wednesday, revealed that the woman was arrested by members of a local vigilante group in a commercial vehicle with N420,000 around 10pm on Wednesday, May 7, 2021.

The statement added that the woman was apprehended in Yankara village along the Funtua/Gusau Road and handed her over to troops by the vigilantes for further investigation.

The woman reportedly died a few days after.

The statement explained, "The attention of the Nigerian Army has been drawn to speculations over the gruesome murder and extortion of a woman in Katsina State. It was alleged that a woman was arrested in a commercial vehicle in possession with money estimated to be N420,000 by members of a local vigilante group on Wednesday, May 7, 2021, around 10pm in Yankara village along the Funtua-Gusau Road and was handed over to troops in order to interrogate the source of the money. Few days later, the woman was said to have been killed by the troops.

"The Nigerian Army, therefore, wishes to inform the general public that it has commenced investigation into the matter and assures the public that anyone found wanting in connection with the allegation will be made to face the full wrath of the law. The Army pleads with the general public to remain calm as it is determined to get to the root of the matter.

"The Nigerian Army wishes to once again reiterate its commitment to the protection of lives and properties of the citizens in accordance with its constitutional responsibility and in strict adherence to the rules of engagement in its operations. Therefore, the Nigerian Army will not tolerate any act of misconduct and unprofessionalism from its personnel."

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Independent investigation, however, showed that the deceased had in her possession about N1.7m as of the time of her arrest.

Credible sources also revealed that after the murder of the victim, her remains were buried in a shallow grave, which was discovered later by security operatives in the course of investigation.

None of the Nigerian Army personnel approached at the 17 Brigade in Katsina was ready to comment on the incident as they all referred enquiries on it to their headquarters in Abuja.

The spokesman for the Katsina State Police Command, SP Gambo Isah, did not take his calls and had yet to reply to a text message sent to his mobile phone as of the time of filing this story.

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