

Rivers driver arrested for losing car to robbers dies in custody

Dennis Naku 7 September 2021

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Rivers State Commissioner of Police, Eboka Friday

A woman, Aishat Ademola, has demanded justice for her 56-year-old husband, Adedeji Ademola, who died in the custody of the State Criminal and Investigation Department in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, last Wednesday.

While speaking to journalists in Port Harcourt, Aishat said her husband passed on after officers at the SCIID allegedly refused him access to his drugs and food.

She explained that before his demise, Adedeji was a driver working for one Mr Adams until robbers stole the car at gunpoint in Akpajo, in the Eleme Local Government Area of Rivers State, and beat him up on August 13, 2021.

She said the car owner used officers at the SCIID to arrest her husband and his surety, without regard to his ill health and the injuries he sustained during the attack by the criminals.

“I was treating him at home. I would carry him whenever he wanted to defecate and help him whenever he wanted to have his bath.

“The man (car owner) didn’t even care. He said his in-law was working at the state CID. He took my husband there with his surety. He locked two of them at the station.

“Whenever I took food there to give him, they (operatives) would not allow me to see him. Later, they pushed the surety out. It was the surety that told us that he was dead and that policemen took him to a mortuary,” she added.

The widow said the police were insensitive to her plight and hid her husband's death from the family.

Aishat stated that her husband would not have died if his employer heeded her pleas to temper justice with mercy when he was attacked by robbers.

"I want people to help me because I don't have anybody to help me. I don't even have money. Look at his children; I don't know what to do because I don't have anything and nobody to help me. I don't have money to carry his coffin.

"I am the one paying school fees now and I don't have anything doing. The owner of the car is saying I can't do anything. Please, I need help," she added.

The surety, Anifowose Oladele, said the deceased, who suffered from an undisclosed medical condition, died on September 1, eight days after he was locked up at the SCIID.

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"On that day, his condition got worse. In the evening, they took us to a police hospital.

"The police said they could not stay with him in the hospital, while the hospital said they could not admit a suspect without the presence of the police.

“They returned us to the cell. In the night, the sickness got worse. Around 6.30 on Wednesday, September 1, the man gave up,” he stated while fighting back tears.

The Chairman of the Rivers State Civil Society Organisation, Enefaa Georgewill, called for a proper investigation into the incident.

He said, “For us in the civil society, we think that the complaints of citizens against the police regarding how they treat citizens have become too many.

“In this particular instance, the position of the civil society is that there should be a thorough investigation first and the officers who are in charge should be subjected to internal disciplinary actions and where they are found wanting, they should face our laws.”

A spokesman for the state police command, Nnamdi Omoni, confirmed the incident, adding that an investigation had been ordered by the police commissioner.

He said, “Well, I have heard of the matter and I can assure you that the interest of justice will not only be served, but will be seen to have been served in the circumstances.

“If anybody is found culpable or liable directly or indirectly, I can assure you that the Commissioner of Police will not shield anybody. We will single out the person whose negligence resulted in that death.”