

Soldier kills truck driver for resisting extortion in Borno

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soldiers

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The killing of a truck driver by a soldier at a military checkpoint at Dikwa along the Maiduguri – Gamboru -Chad Republic road in Borno State over extortion on Tuesday is brewing a serious crisis between the military on one hand and the state government and the Nigeria Union of Road Transport Workers on the other.

The truck driver, Mohammed Bello, of Bulsbulin ward, Maiduguri metropolis, was reportedly conveying humanitarian goods from Maiduguri to N'jamena, the capital of Chad, when he met his death at the military checkpoint.

“The driver was carrying humanitarian goods to N’jamena, Chad, not even anywhere in Nigeria,” the Borno State NURTW Secretary, Ahmadu Miss, disclosed at a news conference in Maiduguri, Thursday, saying, “The goods had been cleared by the Theatre Commander of Operation Hadin Kai, and he was carrying the clearance papers.”

Musa narrated further: “The soldiers at the checkpoint asked for the papers; he promptly presented them; but in receiving the papers, a soldier asked: ‘Are we going to chop papers? Take your paper and bring out money’. The driver said nobody gave me any money to give you.”

He went further: “The soldier then started beating him and his assistants even when they were right inside the truck. When he alighted, the soldier continued beating him until he breathed his last.”

Addressing newsmen over the matter, the Secretary to Borno State Government, Bukar Tijjani, said: “The Borno State Government sees this as a heinous incident, and a brutal one for that matter. It is an incident which the government of Borno State and its people cannot condone.”


He continued: “We also condemn such an incident and hope that it does not happen again. It is condemnable in strongest terms and we hope it does not recur” stressing that, “Anything that will prevent the free movement of our people doing their lawful business must be avoided.

“Let me assure the NURTW leaders that the Borno State Government will take all actions to ensure that anyone found culpable will be brought to book under the laws of Borno State and Nigeria.”

Tijjani said already, the 7 Division of the Nigerian Army headquarters and the state government were deepening discussions to ensure that the NURTW members and other travellers plying the Borno routes were not extorted of their lawful earnings and also to ensure that the free movement of motorists, traders, farmers, herders and other travellers was not hindered by any security agent over any extortion.

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Speaking on behalf of the NURTW, its Secretary, Ahmadu Musa, complained that, “The extortion of our members on this road (Maiduguri-Gamboru-Chad road) is just damn too much.”

In a swift response, the 7 Division confirmed in a statement issued to newsmen, on Thursday, that “The alleged incident occurred on December 26, 2023, along Dikwa-Gamboru Road at a checkpoint where soldiers are deployed for their routine duties.”

The statement, signed by Lt. Col. Ajemusu Jingina, the Division’s Deputy Director, Public Relations, said: “On receiving a complaint of the unfortunate incident, the Division swiftly swung into action and commenced investigation.

“Furthermore, engagement has been established with the NURTW towards a peaceful resolution to the incident. The Division has assured both the family of the deceased and the NURTW of its commitment towards ensuring that justice is served to the family and no stone would be left unturned in this regard.

“In the Division’s effort towards ensuring that the family of the victim gets justice, the soldier in question has been arrested, and an investigation has commenced.

“It’s also worthy to mention that the Division does not tolerate any form of unprofessional conduct from any personnel as we operate within the ambit of the law.

“The Division wishes to once again reassure the members of the general public that we will remain resolute and professional in the joint effort to tackle insecurity in Borno State.”

Investigations by *PUNCH Metro* reveal that there are no fewer than 33 roadblocks/checkpoints along the about 200-kilometer Maiduguri – Gamboru road; and a out 20 along the 180-kilometre Maiduguri-Gubio-Damasak (Niger Republic border) road.