

# LIFELINE

## Gallant cop who battled robbers excited over national honour

... But he's sad that four bullets still remain in his system

BY JOE OSAZUWA

Inspector Jamiu Adekoya is both happy and sad. His bravery in serving Nigeria had fetched him many awards, including national honours. But his health is unstable due to injuries sustained in a fierce combat with daredevil armed robbers.

The gallant officer cheated death on September 9, 2012, when his Rapid Response Squad (RRS) patrol team ran into a group of cruel armed robbers at Ogba area of Lagos, claiming two of his colleagues. Adekoya escaped with 22 bullets lodged in his stomach.

Later, Nigerian doctors were able to extract 18 bullets from his abdomen. The other four, according to medical experts, were stuck in a sensitive area of his stomach and could not be removed by the local doctors. Adekoya had lived with those bullets for more than two years now, causing him pains daily.

He was advised to seek further medical attention in the United States where he can have a surgery to remove the stubborn bullets and also have more comprehensive health care. But he is handicapped, due to financial incapability.

Recently, speaking with our correspondent, in a soft tune, he expressed his eagerness to go back to the battlefield to combat crime and maintain law and order in Nigeria. Adekoya's effortless look and soft-spoken words betray his professional ruggedness in all ramifications.

"In the course of defending my fellow citizens, I came across those armed robbers at Guinness Bus Stop, Ogba, I am still battling with the injuries I sustained from their hands. To me, I believe that Nigeria is worth fighting for. As I speak, I am willing to engage in more confrontations for the sake of defending my country. If my health bounces back, I am still available for Nigeria. I am still suffering from the injury I sustained on my right leg and from the bullets lodged in my stomach. I ought to have been operated upon all this while but it hasn't been done due to lack of financial assistance. I am still on a stagnant position.

"I have been honoured severally both by corporate bodies and governments. The former Inspector General of Police, Mohammed Abubakar, promised me then that he would elevate me to the next rank, which I am still expecting. Though, I have not really got the promotion, it was through the recognition of the Police Authorities that the president recently gave me the national honour, Federal Republic Medal (First Class).



• President Jonathan decorating Adekoya with national honours.

"Again, Nigeria is worth fighting for. This is my only country. And remember that I was only doing my job. It was through the battle with the 15 armed robbers that all these awards kept coming to me, starting from Governor Babatunde Fashola of Lagos State, on December 4, 2012." He said, however, that it's still painful recollecting that he lost two of his subordinates on that day. "But I made sure that I killed the gang leader, even at the point of death," Adekoya recalled.

His ecstasy of being conferred with the prestigious national honours by his country humbled the heroic crime fighter.

He said: "It is one great glory for me to be honoured by the country out of millions of Nigerians. I believe everything was just done by God. When I heard that I had been shortlisted for a national award, I quickly reverence God. I knew it was his mercy that earned me the award. I am an usher in my church. So I turned to the Holy Book and I read Psalm 139 where God says he will have mercy on whom he will have mercy and compassion on anyone He chooses. Then I accepted that my own case was a clear scenario of God's mercy. It is God that made me to be alive till today. If not, I would have been a dead man two years ago."

The significance of the latest award bestowed on Adekoya was a further clarion call for him to further



• Adekoya on hospital bed in 2012.

use his might for Nigerians to sleep at night with their two eyes closed.

"It is an encouraging award. It is simply telling me to do more for my beloved country. I also believe that with my recognition, my colleagues will also be encouraged to work harder beyond their normal duties.

The police officer, who hails from Ayedun in Oke Ero Local Government area of Kwara State, was honoured with the Nigerian Hero Award at The Sun Awards, held on February 23, 2013, at the Eko Hotel and Suites, Lagos. At the event, eminent personalities doled out millions of naira-largely in pledges to Adekoya, for his bravery. On that day, his excitement was understandable.

The joy of being a millionaire in a matter of minutes left him in utter euphoria. As a strong believer in Jesus Christ and a worker in his

church, he might have testified and thanked God for his new position as a miraculous millionaire.

However, unfortunately, despite the about N9 million that was suddenly raised for the lucky cop, Adekoya at the moment, has not received a kobo from many of those that made the pledge.

The gallant officer, who risked his life to abort the robbers' mission, is confused that only a few have so far redeemed their pledges. There were 17 high-ranking Nigerians that rained pledges on Adekoya at the The Sun event, including federal lawmakers and a sitting governor. He has been waiting to receive the physical cash from his donors, and he is still waiting.

According to the gentle-looking but brave officer, he is only pleading with everyone who made promises to him to mercifully redeem

now, to enable him undergo the recommended surgery in USA. Every passing day poses a danger to him as he continues to host those bullets in his stomach.

He lamented: "According to medical experts, they told me after a scan on me that there were four bullets lodged in a sensitive part of my stomach. So, after removing 16 bullets, the surgeons could not go deeper. They recommended that it had to be done abroad. The hidden four bullets are affecting me internally. They gave me neutralisation injection to weaken the bullet's poison, and that has kept me going. But the neutralisation cannot keep me forever.

"Up till this moment, I still visit hospital regularly, spending my personal money. Meanwhile, the first treatment, for which I spent 58 days at the hospital, was paid for by the governor of Lagos State, Babatunde Fashola. He paid for all the operations and every other treatment I had then. But for the past two years, I have been spending from my pocket to stay alive."

He was further pained when he recalled how the news of his new financial status spread after the Sun Award. Becoming a millionaire was a welcome development to the cop, but he was pained that such status only reflected on the pages of newspaper.

Hear him: "The news that I was now a millionaire went round quickly. But how many people will believe that 20 months after, I have not gotten much from the people that promised me one amount or the other? There were two of my friends that wanted to help me but when they heard that I was over N10 million richer, they tactically withdrew. Here I am today, still waiting for my helpers, but I still believe they will redeem their pledges," he trusted.

His handshake with President Goodluck Jonathan would remain indelible to him, Adekoya said. Words, he said, could not explain how elated he felt when called to the podium to be decorated with a rare honour by the country's number one citizen.

"I cannot exactly tell how I felt that day. That was my first time to be with the president. I did not just shake him, but we discussed for some seconds. He had read my story before the day I received the honour, which was September 29. I believe it was my story that motivated him to give me the award. As the president was decorating me with the medal, he told me that I deserved the honour and congratulated me. It was an encounter that boosted my morale to do more for my country. For me to receive the honour, it was a divine intervention in my life, and I return the glory to God," he stated.

Adekoya is, however, appealing to kind-hearted Nigerians to come to his aid, including those who pledged during The Sun Awards. This will enable the patriotic officer travel abroad for his medical treatment.

"I am still appealing to all Nigerians to assist me in having the remaining bullets removed from my system. According to experts, they had removed the ones they could, during the emergency surgical operation. I was advised to go abroad and get the remaining bullets in my stomach extracted because they could not do it in Nigeria," he said.