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Face to face with death

— 10th June 2017

ω How widow was abducted on Lagos street

By OMOLOLU KOLA-DARE

When Mrs Florence Mohammed left her Ijigun-Ilo, Ayobo-Ayetoro residence on Saturday morning, May 20, she had no premonition of what awaited her a few hours later. She escaped death by the whiskers from a three-man-gang of armed robbers in a taxi cab.

Her itinerary was to go to Meran through Ayobo to Command. At Ayobo, she quickly made some withdrawals at a first-generation bank. A taxi cab in Lagos colour pulled by shortly. She innocently entered the cab and a bargain was struck. She was the

only one in the hired cab and she sat at the back. The journey progressed via Church bus stop towards Command and from there to Meran.

Two more 'passengers' contrary to the bargain earlier struck with Mrs. Mohammed were picked on the way. Mrs Mohammed complained that she hired the cab. The driver apologised saying the two passengers were fellow drivers and would soon disembark. It was a ploy. They were accomplices. Mrs. Mohammed bought the dummy and stayed on in the cab.

Her ordeal

Her ordeal has just begun. The two 'passengers' who are comrades in crime suddenly pulled out their guns. One stayed with Mrs Mohammed at the back seat while the second sat with the driver in front. According to Mrs Mohammed, "I froze and became confused. I couldn't shout. I couldn't pray either."

The robbers thundered at her: "Madam, cooperate or we will just waste you." They collected her two phones immediately and sprayed a substance suspected to be sleep inducing and Mrs Mohammed fell into unconsciousness. The journey progressed.

When she regained consciousness, she asked for her phones but no dice. Her ATM card was also taken from her. While in the robbers' cab, her account was emptied. To her chagrin, she was taken to an uncompleted but tastefully furnished building in the middle of Lagos.

The ordeal wore on. They drilled her until daybreak on Sunday morning. There had been reports that Mrs. Mohammed went out on Saturday morning but never returned. Her phones were switched off.

Confusion

When the case was reported in the church CCC, St. Mary Model Parish, Adesina Street, Ijigun-Ilo, Mrs. Mohammed's church, there was confusion. But the shepherd, Most Senior Evangelist Samuel Adesina gave an assurance to the congregation that Mrs. Mohammed would return in one piece before the end of service that Sunday. It came to pass. There was celebration galore when Mrs Mohammed eventually returned.

In the dungeon

Mrs Mohammed spent the night with the hoodlums where she heard the screaming of hapless and helpless victims who were being beheaded for their non-cooperation. "I was offered food but I refused to taste it. Before I was released on Sunday morning, the hoodlums warned me of dire consequences if I should report or take any action against them. A particularly pathetic case was that of a woman and her baby. They wept profusely because they know what fate awaited them. I was induced to sleep throughout the return journey. It was at Oshodi that I became conscious again. The excuse of the kidnappers was the economic recession and that lack of job led them into crime."

God factor

According to Mrs Mohammed, "After I had been dispossessed, the kidnappers offered me N300 as my transport fare back home. They handed me to another set of hoodlums who took me to Oshodi Oke and politely asked me to find my way home."

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