

Woman tells panel how her hubby, 3 labourers were killed, hurriedly buried by SARS

•Demands N50m compensation

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From **Ighomuaye Lucky**, Benin

Mrs. Patience Imaikop, widow of late Samuel Imaikop Brownson, yesterday appeared before the Edo State Judicial Panel of Inquiry for victims of SARS and related abuses to demand for N50 million as compensation for the death of her husband, who was murdered by men of the defunct Special Anti-Robbery Squad, alongside three of his labourers in 2013.

Patience told the panel that her late husband, who once had an altercation with SARS men few days earlier, was on his way to his farm in Ute village along with his three labourers of Hausa extraction when the police shot and killed them.

Patience said after killing them, their bodies were hurriedly taken away for burial.

She said: "The police loaded the bodies of my husband and his three labourers into their van while an officer drove my husband's vehicle along with them to the station.

"When I got the news of my husband's death, I hurriedly rushed to the scene of the incident, hired a car and I traced them to their station, which happened to be the Edo State Police Command headquarters in GRA, Benin City.

"When I got to the police station, I identified myself as the wife of Mr. Samuel Imaikop Brownson.

"I was severely beaten up, accused of being a wife of the leader of an armed robbery gang and I was detained for four nights without food and water and even without them taking my statement.

“I was released five days later after the intervention of my lawyer. To cover their evil deeds, the police hurriedly buried my husband and the labourers, which he hired from 2+2 Junction, a popular spot around the Aduwawa-Eyaen axis of the Benin-Auchi Express road,” she said.

She said that the family, however, mounted pressure on the police to exhume the body of her husband for an autopsy and that the result from the autopsy revealed that he died from bullet wounds.

“The body was exhumed and although decomposed but I was able to recognise my late husband because of the clothes he wore before he left the house that day.

“The pathologist and the court both arrived at a well considered conclusion that my husband died of gun shot wounds fired by the SARS unit of the Edo State Police Command,” she added.