

# The Lifeline

## How police, hospitals cause untimely deaths of gunshot victims

- Victims do not require police report before treatment – Police
- No, your officers still harass us, doctors counter

By Ngozi Nwoke

**WHILE** many grooms jubilate on the night of their bachelor's eve, which is usually filled with happiness, anxiety and anticipation, the case was different for Tunji Ayodele. His fiancée, Beatrice Popoola, who was to be betrothed to him the next day, was gunned down on the eve of their wedding.

Popoola, who until her death was a teacher with Olives College in Lagos, was shot on her way home on the night of November 10, 2012, by armed robbers at Maryland Bus Stop, Lagos. Left seriously wounded and bleeding profusely, she was rushed by a passerby to a nearby hospital but was refused treatment for lack of police report; and like a candle in the wind, her flame was abruptly blown out at sunset.

The shattered groom, who shared his ordeal with *Daily Sun*, said he was yet to recover from the demise of his wife-to-be.

He said: "I was called with her number by a stranger that she was attacked and shot by robbers that evening. I couldn't believe it. I called her family members who rushed to the hospital at Gbagada, Lagos, where she was taken. At that point, she was already losing strength due to the excess bleeding.

"We pleaded with the doctors on duty to treat her, but they only asked us to wait at the reception. After 45 minutes gone, no doctor had attended to her. It was when she couldn't open her eyes that one of the doctors came out to request a police report but by then it was late. I lost her not only because she was shot by robbers but also because the hospital refused to treat her."

It has been ceaseless tears and pain for the



• Gunshot victims

Courtesy: Google

family and friends of 14-year-old Treasure Williams, whose dreams were cut short by a stray bullet from men of the disbanded Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), while chasing after a suspected criminal.

Williams was died from gunshot wounds she sustained on July 27, 2014, in Abuja while waiting for a bus. She died after several hospitals allegedly refused to treat her without a police report.

The case of Anthony Igwe, a businessman who lived in the Adeniyi Jones area of Ikeja in Lagos, is yet another unfortunate incident. He came back to his residence in the wee hours of the night only to be accosted by four armed

men right in his apartment. They shot him several times and fled the scene.

He was rushed to one of the best hospitals in Ikeja only for doctors to insist on police report and N200,000 deposit before treating him. His neighbours who rushed him to the hospital immediately deposited the money, but the doctors stood their ground that a police report must be produced.

Pleas by the victim's family and neighbours fell on deaf ears as the victim bled excessively and gave up the ghost a few minutes after the driver eventually succeeded in obtaining a police report from Area F, Ikeja, Lagos.

Another sad incident occurred in 2008,

when the then chairman of the Lagos State Chapter of National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW), Sarka Saula, was gunned down in his house. He was left to die in a public hospital after being refused treatment for the same reason.

The murder of Prince Amadi, a 300-level student of the University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State, is another pathetic one. He was shot in the waist during a cult clash while studying for his second semester examination in the university's library. He was likewise denied medical attention by a government-owned hospital for his helpless mother's failure to produce a police report.

For Nnamdi Okorie, a businessman, it was a traumatizing experience but he was lucky to survive to tell his sad story. The victim was shot by robbers at Ojota Bus Stop in Lagos, on January 1, 2020, while driving along the expressway.

His friends who were with him in the car rushed him to the nearest hospital in the area, only for doctors to reject him on the grounds that they must produce a police report. But he would remain grateful to his brother, a senior police officer, who stormed the hospital and threatened to sue the doctor, if the patient was allowed to die without treatment.

The police report was eventually provided a few hours later and the victim survived the ordeal.

These are a few heartbreaking incidents out of the many avoidable deaths that have occurred after gunshot wound victims were rejected by medics over failure to produce a police report.

Going by the many deaths reportedly