

Tension as trigger-happy cop kills phone dealer in Delta over N100 bribe

6th April 2023



• Ibe's body

From Paul Osuyi

There was tension in Asaba, Delta State capital, on Wednesday, when youths paraded the body of a young man who was allegedly killed by a trigger-happy police officer, Obi Ebri, an inspector.



• The protesters

The deceased, Onyeka Emmanuel Ibe, was a phone dealer with many shops at the popular Ogbogonogo Market and other shopping malls in the capital city of the state.

His body was retrieved from the morgue of the Federal Medical Centre (FMC), Asaba, by aggrieved youths demanding justice.

The protesting youths in their numbers stormed the headquarters of the state police command with the body on a stretcher, a development that forced the state security council meeting to end abruptly, as tension built up in and around the command.

The late Ibe, said to have hailed from Imo State, was allegedly shot in the presence of his pregnant wife whom he married about three months ago.

Some of the protesting youths told our correspondent that Ibe was shot at close range in the head for refusing to path with N100 to the trigger-happy officer at a checkpoint on Illah-Asaba road while on his way to the state capital.

One of the protesters, who identified himself as Kester, said: “They killed him this morning in the presence of his pregnant wife. He is an international businessman. He just married and his wife is even pregnant. He has eight shops, they killed him because of N100. He is not a Yahoo boy, he sells phones.”

Another aggrieved youth, Obi, demanded justice, insisting that enough was enough of extrajudicial killings. He said: “They stopped the deceased at the checkpoint, and he gave one of the officers N500 as a form of appreciation. But this particular one was angry that nothing was given to him. So, he opened fire and killed Onyeka.”

Obi said the late Ibe was innocent, and has become the latest victim of police killings in Asaba, noting that the youths would not relent until the officer responsible for the killing was brought to justice.

Meanwhile, another version of the story indicated that the police did not demand money from the victim. A human rights activist, Harrison Gwamnishu, said the report he received did not indicate that there was exchange of money.

“When he was travelling into Asaba this morning with his wife, they told him to stop and he thought another officer asked him to go. As he was driving off, the man from the side shot him from behind. He lost control and entered the bush. Immediately, the officers jumped into their vehicle and ran away.

“The anger now is that the police were saying that it was unknown gunmen that killed him. So, we quickly traced the vehicle to Area Command where it was parked somewhere. That was how we discovered that it was the officers that were responsible. Out of anger, the people went to the mortuary and retrieved the corpse to bring it here,” Gwamnishu told newsman at the police command headquarters.

In the meantime, the officer responsible for the killing, Obi Ebri, has been arrested, along with members of his patrol team. Ebri told Daily Sun at the command headquarters his own side of the story.

Related News

- Seplat driving national mandate of youth empowerment, poverty alleviation in Nigeria
- Gburugburu free surgery raises hope in Enugu

- How Dubai returnee was shot dead by vigilante

His words: “This afternoon, we embarked on township patrol on Illah Road, where we were doing stop-and-search. I heard a voice from about 10 to 15 kilometres, saying ‘hold him, hold him.’

“Before I could turn, the young man used his left hand on my rifle nuzzle and said ‘I will kill you and go with your rifle.’ Before I could turn to drag it with him, my belt entered the trigger and it fired.

“It was not intentional, if he had not touched the nuzzle, I would not have followed it up.”

The police officer said he surrendered himself to his office after the incident, even as he denied that the team demanded money from the victim.

“Nobody demanded money from him, rather, he refused to stop for check. We were five in number. I feel very bad because this was not intentional,” he added.

Commissioner of police in the state, Ari Mohammed Ali, who also confirmed the development, condemned it in strong terms.

Ali vowed to ensure that justice is adequately done in the matter, even as he appealed to the bereaved family and the general public to be patient.

The CP also confirmed that the incident startled the state security council meeting which adjourned abruptly to attend to the aggrieved youths.

He said: “We were at the security council meeting this afternoon when we received a distressed call to the effect that an Inspector of police attached to the area command here in Asaba was alleged to have shot and killed an innocent member of the public, one Ibe Emmanuel Onyeka.

“I was at the state security council meeting when the incident happened and because of the seriousness of the incident, we had to hurriedly close from the meeting.

“I got to the command headquarters and saw a mammoth crowd of young boys and girls protesting the death of the innocent civilian.

“I want to put it on record that this command will not take it, neither do I condone it, and the force hierarchy will never support this kind of nasty situation. Consequently, the Inspector has been arrested alongside other members of the team.

“As a disciplined organisation, we have our own internal discipline mechanism, and to put it on record that he would be tried summarily and dismissed and then prosecuted to face justice.

“I want to assure members of the public that justice would be done and served. We cannot condone it and nobody would tolerate it here.”