



Badoo: Man drowns on birthday evading police arrest

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A 20-year-old motorcyclist, Mr. Segun Owolabi, got drowned in a lagoon at Ibeshe village, Ikorodu on his birthday, while attempting to evade being arrested by policemen raiding suspected Badoo members.

The victim was supposed to celebrate his birthday on the Saturday that the Joint Task Force (JTF) stormed Ikorodu, determined to raid all suspected Badoo group hideouts and halt the recurring ritual killings being perpetrated by the gang.

It was also the fateful day that some angry youths threatened to burn down the palace of the monarch of Ibeshe land after Segun's body was retrieved from the lagoon.

According to residents, Segun and his friends were washing their motorbikes when the JTF invaded the community and started raiding suspected Badoo members and hideouts.

Segun and his friends jumped into the lagoon when they saw the policemen coming towards them, aiming to arrest them. Although he was not the only one who dived into the lagoon, he was, however, the only one who died. It was learnt that while his friends swam to safety, Segun drowned because he couldn't swim.

A resident, who gave her name simply as Mama Khadijat, said: "On the fateful day, it was like we were in a war zone. Security agents

stormed our village and seemed to take over everywhere. I was sleeping when I heard people were shouting and calling for help. They said policemen and vigilantes had invaded our village and were arresting people. The policemen came with about 30 Black Marias.

"Youths started to scamper in different directions, attempting to avoid being arrested by the police. Some people were picked from their rooms, while others were arrested right in the presence of their wives and children. It was a serious commotion."

Another resident, who did not want his name in print, said: "It was an unfortunate incident. It was when the dust settled that we discovered that the deceased drowned in the lagoon. Since Segun's parents divorced, he had been fending for himself. He had no one. He was all alone in the world. Even the motorcycle he was washing was bought on instalment. He went to the lagoon to wash the motorbike and was planning to mark his birthday after he was through washing the motorbike. He didn't know that day would be his last on earth."

Segun's distraught father, Mr. Abiodun Owolabi, residing at Ogijo, another community in Ikorodu, told our correspondent that he was at work when he received the news that his son had died.

Abiodun said: "Immediately I received the phone call, I rushed down to Ibeshe; what they gave me was the remains of my son. I fainted instantly; the boy was my heir. He was my only male child. When I tried to find out what led to his death, I was told that some policemen were chasing him and his friends. They had nowhere to run, than to jump into the river. He drowned before the policemen turned back.

"My son was later retrieved from the river about 6p.m. same day. He was buried at the bank of the river as tradition demands. I want the policemen who chased and made him to drown to be investigated. I want them to be brought to justice. He didn't commit any crime; why were they chasing him? He would have still been alive today."

Segun's younger sister, Anjola Owolabi, said: "The death of my brother was a shock. We had already prepared to celebrate his 20th birthday. It was on that day he died. And he had to die in the lagoon."

Chief Akeem Awogboju, the head of herbalists in the community, said: "The boy's death was an unfortunate incident. After the incident happened, we made efforts to persuade you in the community not to take laws into their hands. God knows, nobody expected the deceased and his friends to jump into the lagoon when they sighted the police."

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21

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