

Ex-minister, gen. shagaya, dies in auto crash



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...ACF, IBB, Mark mourn

Former ECOMOG Peacekeeping Commander in Liberia, General John Nanzip Shagaya (rtd), yesterday died in an auto crash on his way to his hometown, Langtang, Plateau State. Shagaya, was former lawmaker representing Plateau State Southern Senatorial District and Minister of Interior in the regime of former military President, General Ibrahim Babangida, was driving back to Jos after attending the burial of his nephew, who was killed in Benue State during one of the killings by Fulani herdsmen. It was learnt that the accident occurred on Langtang Kanke Road when the Sport Utility Vehicle (SUV) he was

travelling in crashed, which threw him, his driver and his security into the bush.

Shagaya was recently appointed the chairman of the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS) by President Muhammadu Buhari and was waiting for his swearing in before his untimely death. When our correspondent visited the Shagaya residence at Gold and Base, Jos, many sympathisers were trooping into the house while a family source confirmed that the former senator died in an accident on his way to Jos from Langtang.

The deceased had led a delegation of Arewa Elders' Forum on a condolence visit to the people of Benue State and returned to his Gold and Base residence before departing to Langtang for the burial ceremony. Reports said his remains had been deposited at the Air Force Military Hospital in Jos.

The Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC), which confirmed Shagaya's death, said the lone accident occurred about 2.45p.m. on Langtang-Pankshin Road. The Corps Commander, Corps Public Education Officer, Bisi Kazeem, said in a statement that an FRSC team from Langtang Unit Command was at the scene of the crash almost immediately after the crash.

"He was reportedly travelling in a Toyota Land Cruiser Jeep with his driver and an orderly from Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC). Preliminary report indicates that the driver lost control

and hit a tree making the general to sustain a head injury that eventually led to his death.

The two injured aides of the general are currently in Pankshin General Hospital while the corpse of General Shagaya has been deposited at the Air Force Hospital Mortuary in Jos,” Kazeem said. He added that the FRSC Corps Marshal, Boboye Oyeyemi, had expressed his condolences to the family. Meanwhile, the apex northern socio-cultural organisation, Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF), yesterday mourned the passing away of Shagaya, who was its Vice-Chairman, Board of Trustees (BoT). ACF said in a statement it received “with shock and grief the sad news of the passing away of... Shagaya”.

The statement signed by the ACF National Publicity Secretary, Muhammad Ibrahim Biu, said: “The late Shagaya was a fine officer and gentleman, who started his military career from the Nigerian Military School, Zaria and attained the rank of a Brigadier-General in the Nigerian Army.” Also, former President Babangida said he received Shagaya’s death with great shock. Babangida said in a statement he personally signed that Shagaya, until his death, had been an ardent supporter of the unity of Nigeria as a nation and a peace builder irrespective of ethnicism, tribalism and religious bigotry.

He said: “Equally, my condolences go to the Chief of Army Staff, Lt. General Tukur Yusuf Buratai on the demise of his father a veteran of the Nigerian Army at

the age of 103. “Similarly, I condole with members of the Fourth Estate of the Realm over the demise of veteran broadcaster, late Mahmoon Baba Ahmed, who died at the age of 74.” Also, the immediate past President of the Senate, David Mark, described Shagaya’s death as tragic and devastating. Mark said in a statement signed by his Media Assistant, Paul Mumeh, that Shagaya was a friend, comrade and colleague. “He was among the best and fertile minds in the Armed Forces during our days in the Nigerian Army. He believed in the sanctity of our unity. He believed in the rule of law and in a society where every citizen is free to pursue his or her legitimate ambition in any part of the country without fear of molestation or intimidation,” Mark said.