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Community Protests Killing of Youth

09.28.2009

Residents of Iju Ishaga, a Lagos suburb, weekend, trooped to the streets, to protest the killing of a youth, Dele Sodipo, by an officer in the state police anti-robbery squad.

The police successfully dispersed the crowd and later stationed an Armoured Personnel Carrier (APC) at Ishaga Roundabout, widely known as the abode of area boys and hoodlums, to prevent them from cashing in on the incident.

Bonfires littered roads in the area yesterday, while a carcass of the traffic police post set ablaze during the protest was seen at the area.

The rioters moved to enter the police station but were prevented by anti-riot policemen, led by the Divisional Police Officer, Remy Ogbonna.

There are several versions to events leading to the death of Shodipo, 30, an automobile rewire technician who also washes cars.

One said he had a quarrel with his girlfriend, Rose, whose mother is a Nigerian and father a Ghanaian.

Rose was said to have reported the matter to the police, who came to arrest Shodipo, who in turn, engaged the officers in an argument that led to firing gun shots to scare the people, one of which hit him on the leg. Shodipo, who was married with two children, was taken to the hospital where he died.

Other sources said both Shodipo and a policeman were dating Rose, and when she had a misunderstanding with him, she called on her policeman lover who mobilised his colleagues to bring Shodipo to the station.

There was a mild resistance from Shodipo who told the officers that it was a minor dispute and did not require police intervention.

The argument made a police corporal in the team to fire a shot which hit him on the left leg, and he started bleeding. Police Public Relations Officer, Frank Mba, confirmed the incident, but denied that the incident had to do with Shodipo and the policeman dating Rose.

He said a case of rape was reported, and the officers, knowing the volatile nature of the area where the offence was allegedly committed, went with a patrol van and arms to invite the suspect.

Mba alleged that Shodipo resisted arrest and hoodlums attacked the police, which made the officer to fire gun shots into the air to scare them.

A stray bullet hit the deceased on the leg, according to Mba, who said Rose had been arrested and put in protective custody to prevent reprisal attack.

He said investigation of the case has begun, and the officer who shot Shodipo arrested and transferred to the State Criminal Investigation Department (SCID), Panti, in Yaba, for interrogation.

"The command will not spare any policeman who uses fire arm unlawfully," Mba said.

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