

How Soldiers Killed Artisan in Auchi

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Godwin Ifijeh

The heart-rending killing in cold blood of a 25-year old orphan and automobile electrical apprentice, Godwin Iraoya Junior in Auchi, Edo State on Monday, October 19, 2020, by two gun-wielding soldiers during a peaceful #Endsars protest in the town instantly invoked provocation across the land. The incident moved many to uncontrollable tears, including the Palace of the Otaru of Auchi, which reacted no less.

The last of his parents' five children, Iraoya, who turned 25 on October 3, 2020, having been born on October 3, 1995, was allegedly killed by soldiers attached to Setraco (Nig) Ltd Life Camp, a staff housing estate of the construction firm located a few metres away from Jattu junction in Etsako West Local Government Area of Edo State.

According to eyewitness accounts, Godwin Iraoya Junior's killing arose from an unprovoked assault on the protesters by the two soldiers, who were insistent on getting off the barricades placed on the road by them notwithstanding that their movement was not hindered in any way.

His killing was said to have particularly elicited provocation in the neighbourhood because the young man was not in any way connected with the protest but just walking through on his way to the workshop, where he was an apprentice when he encountered the peaceful protesters and got shot by the soldiers.

In an effort to scare away the protesters and get the road cleared, the soldiers were said to have fired indiscriminately and in the process hit Godwin Iraoya Junior, who fell to the ground in his pool of blood, reeling in pain until he was picked up by some good Samaritans and rushed to a nearby hospital, Jey M Jey Clinic, a popular private medical facility in the town, where they gave him the initial first aid in an effort to stabilise him. However, he was said not to have immediately gotten any good treatment as there was no doctor on ground until a while after. When that eventually showed up, he was said to have directed that the patient was taken to the Irrua Specialist Teaching Hospital (ISTH), a directive that was not too pleasing to those who took him there, scared that he could die from the delayed treatment and perhaps before he gets to Irrua from Auchi.

His conveyors eventually settled to take him to the ISTH, Irrua but like they feared, he gave up the ghost on the way and his family members led by his Uncle, Mr. Titus Oisamoje Iraoya, and other sympathisers, who went with him, returned with the corpse to Auchi and went straight with it to the palace of the Otaru of Auchi, where they staged some protests before taking it for deposit in a morgue in Jattu.

His elder brother, Mark Iraoya, had described Godwin as quiet and easy-going, stating that they were from Otuo in Owan East Local Government Area LGA) of Edo State.

According to him, Godwin Iraoya Junior and the rest of the children had been struggling, trying on their own to survive since they became orphans after the death of their father, Abel Oisadiaye Iraoya in 1997, and their mother, Mrs. Gladys Iraoyah Nee Peru's, a year later from prolonged grieving over her husband's death, stressing that Godwin, who completed his secondary education at Azama College, Otuo, was born in Sapele, their late mother, being from the family of Late Chief Peru of Okpe Clan, Awolowo Road Extension, Sapele, Delta State.

He appealed to the Federal and Edo State Governments to ensure that the chilling murder of Godwin Iraoya Junior was investigated and justice served as his life was unjustifiably cut short, stating that he was neither a protester nor a violent person.

Video footage of his shooting by the soldiers recorded by POPORI TV has since gone viral to validate the incident.