

BREAKING NEWS

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Shocking: Police officer accused of murder disappears in prison custody

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By BARTHOLOMEW MADUKWE

The Comptroller of Kirikiri prison in Lagos, has told a Lagos High Court in Igboere that a police officer attached to Ajeromi Police Station, Sgt. Joseph Ugbah, who is being accused of murder of one Okafor Charles at a viewing center, could not be traced at the prison.

The presiding judge, Justice Ebenezer Adebajo, on several adjournments had issued a “Production Warrant” to Kirikiri and Ikoyi prisons. In his reply dated September 13, 2012, the Kirikiri Prison Comptroller told the court that there was no trace of the defendant, while the Ikoyi Prison is yet to give any information on the defendant.

Twenty nine-year-old Sgt. Ugbah (defendant) is facing one- count charge of murder, an offence contrary to section 319 (1) of the Criminal Code Law Cap C. 17 Vol. 2 Laws of Lagos State 2003.

The charge LCD/31/12 reads: “Sgt. Joseph Ugba ‘M’ on April 1, 2010 at about 07.00pm at the DSTV Hall in the Ajeromi Area of Lagos in the Lagos Judicial Division murdered one Okafor Charles.” It will be recalled that the prosecutor, Mr. O. Soetan, had asked the court for a further date to enable him ascertain the defendant’s whereabouts, and the case has seen 7 adjournments before it was again adjourned to February 2, 2013.

Crime Alert gathered that the defendant joined the Nigeria Police in 1992, served in Imo State before coming to Lagos State (Ajeromi Division), where he was attached to the Anti Robbery Team. In a statement to the police, the deceased’s father, Mr. William Okafor, a clergyman, said those who witnessed the alleged murder of his son told him that Charles (deceased) and others were in a film hall when the police from Ajeromi Division stormed the hall and ordered all person’s to lie flat. “The police started searching their pockets and was removing the money in their pockets. On getting to Charles, he challenged the police for searching their pockets and removing their money. The challenge got one of the police officers angry, and he used the butt of his rifle to hit Charles.

After that, the police officers then asked everybody to leave the hall, while Charles still remained lying on the ground.”

On how the deceased's father was treated at the Ajeromi Police station, 55-year-old Williams said "I went to the DPO of Ajeromi Police Station and introduced myself as the father of the deceased, and he said he did not send any of his men there to make trouble. He (DPO) pleaded with the people outside the police station to be calm, to enable the police take the corpse to the mortuary. My late son is unmarried and works as a traveling agent, and I depend on him for survival,"he stated.

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