

'CUSTOMS' OFFICER'S ALLEGED MURDER: They shot our brother dead, claimed he died in accident – Family

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Nigeria Customs Service is at the centre of a controversy surrounding alleged extra judicial murder of an official but staged as auto accident by his colleagues.



Yusuf Akinleye

The colleagues, it was learnt, claimed Yusuf Akinleye was killed in an accident on the Third Mainland Bridge, Lagos during an operation whereas the family said the marks found on his body were consistent with those of a victim that had been shot.

According to the family, there were about five bullet wounds on the body, two on the arm and three on the neck, as of the time of burial.

Although Yusuf was buried penultimate Friday, same day he died, two family members, who spoke to Sunday Vanguard, said they had the photos of the victim to prove their claim.

Ashimiyu Akinleye, Yusuf's immediate senior brother, and Michael Kolawole, his cousin, said the deceased may have been killed by his colleagues and concocted the accident story to cover up the heinous act.

They however could not tell the rank of the deceased.

Ashimiyu only said his brother may have been in Customs on a temporary appointment based on the discussion they had sometime last year when Yusuf told him he was going to enlist in the NCS.

When the deceased, according to him, mentioned that he wanted to join the Customs, he (Ashimiyu) noted that the Service was not recruiting but Yusuf told him a friend was helping to arrange a temporary appointment pending when NCS would formalise the recruitment.

Then he narrated that Yusuf began working in the Federal Operations Unit (FOU) of the Customs at Ikeja, Lagos until penultimate Friday when he received a telephone call from a woman from the FOU who told him his brother had died in a motor accident on the Third Mainland Bridge during an operation against smugglers.

Stationed in Abuja, Ashimiyu said he could not immediately come to Lagos to verify the death but he called one of his siblings, Kamoru Akinleye, and cousin, Michael Kolawole, both of whom are resident in Lagos, to inform them of the development and meet the Customs authorities.

"I was confused learning about the death of a brother on phone. I felt like growing wings and flying to Lagos from Abuja to know what was happening. But since that was impossible, I had to call two of our family members in Lagos to visit the Customs and find out what the situation was", he told Sunday Vanguard.

Kolawole said that on getting to the FOU headquarters in Ikeja, he and Kamoru met the Deputy Comptroller Administration who briefed them about Yusuf's death in motor accident.

According to the family member, who is a pastor in the Redeemed Christian Church of God, the Deputy Comptroller told them the corpse had been packaged for burial that same day for burial since Yusuf, also called Alfa, was a Muslim.

He said the Customs authorities then got an ambulance to convey the corpse to Ibadan, the home town of the Akinleyes, for burial, saying however that he did not go on the trip with the team because he had some assignment in Lagos that Friday.

Kolawole said the only family member who went with the corpse alongside some Customs officials was Kamoru, Yusuf's sibling.

The pastor stated that the FOU officials gave the team N40, 000 to take care of welfare and burial expenses.

Ashimiyu, who claimed to be monitoring all the developments on phone from his Abuja base, told Sunday Vanguard that when the team arrived Ibadan, family members insisted on washing the corpse before burial only to uncover the clothes in which it was wrapped to behold at least five bullet wounds on the body.

"We believed the story of our brother dying in accident up to that point. The bullet marks pointed to the suspicion that Yusuf was murdered and the accident story concocted to cover up the heinous act. I asked my people to take photographs of the bullet wounds on the body before burial according to Islamic rites which they did", the bereaved brother said.

According to him, following the discovery, the family decided to send a team to the FOU last Monday to demand for a doctor's report on the deceased, a police report on the purported accident in which Yusuf died and the vehicle involved in the crash.

Ashimiyu said the family team, including Kamoru and Kolawole, returned to the Customs Headquarters in Ikeja and briefed the Deputy Comptroller Administration on the twist to the death, saying the Customs top official was astonished about the revelation, following which the team in which Yusuf served on that fateful Friday was summoned to respond to the allegation of extra judicial killing of their colleague.

The Deputy Comptroller, he said, promised the family that the death of his brother will be investigated while all seven members of the Yusuf team were ordered to be detained pending the conclusion of the probe.

"All we want is justice. We have cause to believe that our brother was murdered", Ashimiyu said.

He thanked Customs authorities for the financial assistance they gave to the family since the death of Yusuf.