

How SARS officers murdered my son in cold blood, stole N4m from him — AYINLA

3 By Shina Abubakar

O**SOGBO**—AS the Osun State panel of inquiry set up to investigate Police brutality and extrajudicial killings in the state commenced its sitting yesterday, a petitioner, Rasheed Ayinla, has given a gory detail how his son, Ismaila, was killed in cold blood by the disbanded Special Anti-Robbery Squad, SARS, personnel to steal his money.

Ayinla in his petition before the panel claimed his son was killed by two personnel of the disbanded SARS unit, identified as 'Odua' and 'Are' at Ile-Labo Sinmi Oko guest house in Iwo, on July 18, 2020 after lodging at the guest house the previous day.

According to Ayinla, Ismail, a father of five was shot dead in the early hours of the morning by SARS personnel who claimed he was an armed robber that invaded the hotel at night.

Ayinla said only N997, 730.00 was found on deceased son out of the N5 million on him.

The victim's father said: "The deceased, Ismaila Rasheed, left Ore, Ondo State, on 17th day of July, 2020, on a mission to buy rams for Eid Fitri Celebrations. He got Iwo same day at about 9:30 p.m. He decided to pass the night in a hotel till the following day when he would proceed on the journey to the northern part of Nigeria to buy rams in large quantity for his customers.

"He headed straight to Ile Labo Sinmi Oko Guest House at about 9:30 pm where he lodged until the

unfortunate incident took place at about 2a.m. in wee hours of the next day. At the Guest House were the Manager, Afeez Tella Adio and other attendants - Afeez, Ayisat and Yinka.

"To beef up security along Iwo/Ibadan Expressway, two Police Officers, from Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) had been accommodated in the Guest House by the owner, Alhaji Ayo Dauda Adigun, on the consent of the Divisional Police Officer, DPO. The two officers, "Odua" and "Are" had stayed in the guest house for about seven months for free of charge.

"Late Ismaila Rasheed was given room in the guest house by the Manager, Afeez Adio. The deceased watched alongside other guests, particularly the football fans the match between Arsenal and Liverpool on that day.

At about 3:30 am, one of the officers of the SARS in the guest house, called the Manager, Afeez Tella Adio, that they had shot dead one of the thieves that invaded the Guest house.

The Manager rushed to the guest house and found Ismaila Rasheed in his pool of blood. The Manager said, the last word from the deceased was Omo Ole, o ti pa mi (Thieves, you have killed me)

"At about 6:20am on 18/7/2020, the Manager ran to the house of the owner of the Guest House, at Iwo, to inform him of the development. The owner of the Guest House ran there and found the D.P.O and other officers of the Nigeria Police were there before him.

"The duo of the SARS officers in the

guest house, shot dead the deceased, Ismaila Rasheed, in his cold blood on 18/7/2020 and stole the N4, 000,000.00 meant for the purchase of rams. One Isiaka, the deceased friend, who the deceased called last about 2:30am on 18/7/2020, made bold to say that his deceased friend, had on him N5 million for the purchase of the rams. The deceased body was taken to the mortuary at the General Hospital, Iwo, by the Police and he was eventually buried on 20/7/2020 at Obatedo Cemetery, Iwo, amid tears from the sympathizers", reads the petition

Similarly, a joint signatory to the petition, Adio Dauda, the owner of the hotel, also said his business had suffered great loss due to the action of the SARS personnel, adding that since the incident, customers have abandoned the guest house.

He sought the relief of the committee to make available for his business, which has suffered, the sum of N6 million while the deceased father sought the return of the stolen N4 million from the deceased and additional N100 million as damages to take care of his two wives and five children.

However, the Chairman of the Panel, retired Justice Akin Oladimeji, urged the petitioners to make a proper breakdown of the damages sought from government to justify their losses.

He also urged victims to come out and tell their stories, saying the panel would not compromise its integrity and would ensure they get justice.