



OMOBOLANLE RAHEEM:

Killer policeman, accomplices to face orderly room trial

•Sanwo-Olu sues for calm•IG condemns shooting, killing

By Olasunkanmi Akoni & Esther Onyegbula

BARELY THREE weeks after policemen attached to Ajiwe Divisional police killed a 31-year-old man, another trigger-happy police officer from the same station shot dead a legal practitioner, Barrister Omobolanle Raheem, on Christmas day.

Mrs Omobolanle Raheem was a member of the Lagos Branch of the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA).

According to sources, Barrister Omobolanle was in her private car with her husband and two other occupants when the incident happened under Ajah over-head Bridge, in the Lekki area of the state.

The suspect, an Assistant Superintendent of Police, Drambi Vandi, who has been in the police service for 33 years, and his team reportedly mounted illegal checkpoints where they extort motorists when the unfortunate incident happened.

"The police officer is from Ajiwe Police Station. Her husband was the one driving, Barr. Omobolanle was seated in the front with her husband.

"The officer asked them to park and they needed the vehicle in front to move so they can park well and immediately the police officer shot at a close range right into her chest. Realizing what happened, the rest of the police officers on duty disappeared into thin air.

"Subsequently, after a report was lodged, policemen from Ajiwe Police Station raced to the scene to remove her body to the mortuary in Yaba, without obtaining any consent from her family members. "The family later located her body at the mortuary," the source narrated.

Another source, who claimed to be the deceased's junior colleague, said her husband slowed down and was waiting for the car in front of them to move so he could park properly.

"My boss Omobolanle Raheem was shot dead by a police officer on her way back from Christmas service at Ajah under the bridge.

"Her family just called me now, that they need a lawyer to stand in for them before the police change the narrative.

"They have taken the matter to Ajiwe Police Station. The police officer is from Ajiwe station.

"Her husband was the one driving, Omobolanle was seated in the front with her husband.

"The officer asked them to park and they needed the vehicle in front to move so they can park well, and immediately the police officer shot at a close range right into her chest.

"On seeing what happened, the remaining police officers on duty there absconded.

"After a while, some policemen came and moved her body to the mortuary in Yaba, without obtaining any consent from her family members.

A resident of Ajah said; "Those of us that live around Ajah are familiar with the many atrocities of the officers of Ajiwe Police Station. They are always drunk with



•Late Omobolanle Raheem

alcohol while on duty.

"This was a very sad event yesterday when I was coming back from church.

"The officer was visibly drunk and all entreaties from his colleagues to allow the lady's husband who was driving the car to go proved abortive.

"While the lady's husband was looking for a space to park his, the officer shot at the vehicle and the bullet went straight to the chest of the deceased and she died right there on the spot.

"Thanks to members of the public that chased after the police officer and his colleagues who tried to run away from the scene and apprehended them."

Confirming the sad incident, Lagos State Police Public Relations Officer, Superintendent of Police, SP Benjamin Hundeyin, described the incident as "unfortunate and avoidable."

He confirmed that the suspected officer who shot Raheem dead and two other of his team members have been arrested and in detention to be transferred to the State Criminal Investigation Department, SCID, Yaba, for further action.

Hundeyin who described the incident as "unfortunate and avoidable," added that the ASP that shot and two others with him have since been taken into custody. "They are to be moved to the SCID for further investigation," he said.

Meanwhile, Lagos State Governor, Babajide Sanwo-Olu has expressed shock and sadness over the mindless shooting of "a harmless citizen" by a police officer whose primary job was to protect the same citizen.

Sanwo-Olu sympathized with the family, friends and associates of the deceased, pledging the state government's full support and cooperation with the police

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authorities in their investigation to unravel the remote and immediate cause of the shooting, that led to the untimely death of the innocent citizen, with a view to ensuring that justice is served.

He said: "I have studied preliminary reports on the matter and have instructed the appropriate Government officers to immediately get on it. We must ensure a speedy justice for the late Bolanle. Our Government cannot sit back and watch our citizens killed by the same law enforcers that should ordinarily protect them."

Sanwo-Olu, however, appealed to residents to remain calm and not take the law into their hands on the matter, assuring residents that the government will live up to her responsibilities and get justice for the late Raheem.

The Governor, prayed for the repose of the late Bolanle Raheem's soul, asking God to grant her immediate family and friends the fortitude to bear the irreparable loss.

IG condemns shooting, killing

The Inspector-General of Police, IG, Mr Usman Baba, has condemned the shooting and killing of the legal practitioner, describing the incident as unfortunate and ordered speedy investigation and prosecution of the officers responsible for the ugly and unprofessional act.

He said the act didn't portray the Nigena Police Standard Operating Procedure and core values.

Baba commiserated with the family, friends, and colleagues of the deceased and prayed for the repose of her soul.

He pledged to ensure that justice prevailed in the case and warned officers and men of the Force to be professional and people-oriented in the discharge of their duties.

Baba urged police officers to always operate within the ambit of the law, adding that the Force leadership would not condone any inappropriate or unprofessional acts.

NBA reacts

The NBA President, Mr Yakubu Chonoko Maikyau, while acknowledging the sympathy and regret of the police authorities over the incident, said that the NBA has demanded that the Nigerian Police officially disclose and immediately release to Nigerians the fuller details of the errand of officer and other officers responsible for the heinous act.

The NBA President has informed the police of the resolve of the NBA to be a complainant in this case along with the family of late Mrs. Omobolanle Raheem.

The NBA President has in this regard constituted a team comprising of National Officers, Chairman and Vice Chairperson of NBA Lagos Branch and Chairman of NBA Ikeja Branch with a mandate to follow up and ensure a speedy but thorough investigation of this crime.

The NBA, Epe Branch, also, visited the Ajiwe Ajah, Lagos

The NBA, which was represented by its Secretary, Aare Olatun Hassan, condemned the killing by the police officer, who was believed to be arrogantly trigger-happy under suspicious circumstances.

Meanwhile, the suspect and his accomplices have been moved to FCID in Panti, Yaba for an Orderly Room trial.

Falana reacts

Meanwhile, human rights activist and Lagos-based Lawyer, Femi Falana SAN, has urged the Lagos State Commissioner of Police, Mr Abiodun Alabi, to ensure justice is done in accordance with the law.

Giving three suggestions and how justice would be ensured, he said, "The NBA should set up a team of lawyers to hold a watching brief if the suspect is charged before the high court. Otherwise, the case may be struck out for want of diligent prosecution.

"The NBA should set up another legal team to assist the family to file a civil case for aggravated damages.

"The Human Rights Committees of the 128 branches of the NBA should ensure that lawyers and other citizens are not arrested illegally, detained illegally, tortured illegally and killed illegally."