

**METRO**

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## Alleged murder of driver by soldiers: Investigation ongoing – Army



Limited, a car dealing company, who was going to deliver a brand new 2022 Toyota Corolla in Abuja, when he was flagged down at a military checkpoint, at Ojodu Berger, outward Lagos.

Some men in military uniform suspected to be soldiers, were said to have insisted on taking Lawal to their barracks but they were said to have detoured to Iyana-Ipaja tollgate axis, where they allegedly shot the driver dead, dumped the body in a bush and zoomed off with the brand new car.

Sources at the car dealing company said the deceased was shot on the left side of the chest and lower abdomen.

Meanwhile, it was gathered from sources that another driver in a Hilux van, who was driving ahead of the deceased on the day of the tragedy, was also heading to Abuja, observed what happened.

The second driver was said to have witnessed the arrest of his colleague and reported same to the Police.

He was said to have identified the three soldiers that accosted his late colleague, before some senior military personnel at the 9 Brigade, Ikeja Cantonment.

One of his friends, who spoke with Vanguard, yesterday, said he was thereafter, detained. As press time, it was not clear whether he had been released.

There were, however, different accounts of what happened on the faithful day. While a version of the account said three of the soldiers had been identified and accosted by the Police, another version said they were with Army authorities at the 9 Brigade of the Nigerian Army, Ikeja Cantonment.

But none of the agencies confirmed they were in their custody when Vanguard probed further. Sources at the 9 Brigade, Ikeja Cantonment said a parade of its soldiers was held immediately the news reached the Brigade to know who was not around.

The sources said: “So far, no soldier was absent as at the time the parade held.”

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Contacted, spokesman for the Lagos State Police Command, Benjamin Hudenyin, said the command and the 9 Brigade were investigating the matter.

### Investigation has commenced—Army

On his part, acting Deputy Director, Army Public Relations, 81 Division, Lt.Col. Olabisi Ayeni, in a statement, yesterday, said the Division had commenced investigation into the alleged killing.

According to him, “In as much as information into the allegation is still scanty at the moment, being a responsible organisation, Headquarters 81 Division Nigerian Army considers it appropriate to bring the occurrence to public notice and the steps taken to identify the alleged persons in military uniform, believed to be soldiers, and bring them to justice, if truly they are serving soldiers.

“At the end of the investigation, if the suspects are identified as serving soldiers, they will be made to face the full wrath of both military and civil laws.

“While the matter is under investigation, Headquarters 81 Division requests the family of the deceased to exercise patience and await the outcome of the investigation as whoever is found wanting will be made to face disciplinary action.

“The Nigerian Army has zero tolerance for troops’ misconduct or involvement of its personnel in any form of criminality, hence, will not allow this allegation to go unraveled. “Consequently, the General Officer Commanding 81 Division NA, Maj Gen MT Usman, commiserates with the family of the victim while promising that justice would be served accordingly. He assures the family of the deceased that whosoever killed their loved one will not be allowed to go unpunished.”

Meanwhile, a group of persons have started calling for justice for the deceased driver.

The group with #Justice for Lawal, called on the Nigerian Army to ensure that the matter was not swept under the carpet.

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