

## I regret coming back to Nigeria — 92-yr-old mourns, as son dies in police cell



*IGP Kayode Egbetokun*

**By Evelyn Usman**

**For 92-year-old Festus Arhagba, life has become an endless nightmare of grief and regret after his 50-year-old son, Kingsley, reportedly died in police custody at the Ajeromi Division, Lagos, under what he described as a chilling mix of “deception, cruelty and extortion.”**

**Sitting in his modest Lagos home, leaning heavily on a walker, the frail nonagenarian battling paralysis recounted to Saturday Vanguard how the family’s torment began on June 26, 2025, when policemen later identified as operatives of the IGP Intelligence Response Team, Abuja, arrested his younger son, Kenneth.**

In a quivering voice, he said: “I regret coming back to this country. I was employed directly from abroad to come here. Since I came to this country, I have never had this type of experience. My 50-year-old son, Kingsley, was the one taking care of me. Now I don’t know what to do.

“He had gone to drop his children at school when the policemen, five in number, handcuffed him in the presence of my grandchildren and whisked him away. For four agonizing days, we did not know where Kenneth was. Then I received a call from a policeman who identified himself as ASP Danjuma, telling us to bring food for Kenneth at Ajeromi Police Station.”

But the family’s hope soon turned into horror, as Kingsley was reportedly detained on arrival. Later, according to the nonagenarian, a family contact was told to bring

**someone on 'level 12' for Kenneth's bail.**

**He said: "I told them I didn't have anyone at that level, but I could bring my house documents. They agreed. I gave the documents to a Deacon who took them to the station. By the time he got there, he found that my elder son had collapsed. At the hospital where he was taken, doctors said Kingsley had died before he was brought in, and the policemen vanished, claiming they went to 'pump their tyre.'"**

## **Root cause**

**The tragedy's roots trace back to a bitter dispute over a storey building on Salami Street, Tolu Road, in the Ajeromi Ifelodun area. Kenneth, the younger son earlier arrested, explained that years ago he had helped his ex-girlfriend, Mary James, facilitate the property purchase.**

**"Mary used my late elder brother's name as the buyer on the 'Contract of Sale,'" he revealed, adding that title documents were never produced. The matter was said to have been reported at the Force Criminal Investigation Department, FCID, Alagbon, when the documents failed to appear, leading to the arrest of the seller, identified simply as Prince, who reportedly told detectives that the papers were with the EFCC and promised to refund the money to Mary.**

**But, Kenneth said, "the matter took a new twist, when Mary bypassed the police and settled directly with Prince. She shared a video showing them preparing a fresh deed".**

## **Forfeiture**

**Further findings revealed that four months ago, the Federal High Court in Lagos ordered the final forfeiture of the building to the Federal Government after the EFCC linked it to N89 million siphoned from Sterling Bank during a system glitch. A mark that read " EFCC. keep off" was boldly seen in front of the building when Saturday**

Vanguard visited.

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But some persons said to be posing as owners of the building were accused of forging documents, including the Oluwa family receipt and Deed of Assignment, allegedly used to obtain N69 million from a complainant, Anthony Nlebedim, and his son, Ikechukwu Sylvester Nlebedim, despite being aware that the property in question was under dispute.

## Incommunicado

Kenneth expressed shock that when arrested, he discovered in Abuja that the petition against him was for kidnap, conspiracy and threat to life.

He recalled in pain: “I was handcuffed and thrown into the cell at Ajeromi Division on Thursday, taken to the Marine Police on Friday, where I spent two nights before I was taken to Abuja on Sunday night of June 29, 2025.

All through my detention, I did not eat. I was deprived of calling anyone for four days. One of the policemen told me that he had strict instructions to prevent me from speaking to anyone and even if I died in detention, nothing would happen. I was released because of my elder brother’s death.”

## Call for Justice

Now, the Arhagba family has petitioned the Inspector General of Police, calling for justice and prosecution of those behind Kingsley's death.

"The police have killed one of my children," Festus sobbed, sinking back into his chair as his wife, silently pacing the room, wiped away her own tears.

Meanwhile, police sources claimed Kingsley collapsed in the presence of his relatives and was not tortured. But for the Arhagba family, that explanation did little to heal the gaping wound left by a death they see as needless, cruel, and emblematic of a system where "justice is still too often silenced".