

"Nigeria Happened to Senator Kontagora" — But Who's Next?

This morning, I received the news of Senator Ibrahim Musa Kontagora's death with a heavy heart. Not just because he died, but how he died. Allah ya jikanshi da rahama. Going through multiple reports to confirm the incidence, I found out that the former senator was denied a critical, life-saving surgery at a private hospital in Abuja because he could not immediately pay the remaining \$15,000 (₦23 million) of his bill. He had already deposited half. But the hospital allegedly refused to proceed until the full balance was paid. While paperwork, bank alerts, and bureaucracy moved at their own pace, his soul departed. Let that sink in:

A Nigerian senator died — not because there was no cure, not because there were no doctors — but because there was no payment. It Shook Me — Because I've Lived a Version of That Pain

This wasn't just another headline. It triggered something deep within me — a bitter memory I'd rather have forgotten. When my wife was pregnant, we registered at the Federal Medical Centre. As expected, we were made to pay upfront — not just for antenatal care, but for tests, blood, and even delivery — all to be provided months later. But complications arose, and she had to deliver elsewhere. We requested a refund for the unused services. The hospital refused — no explanation, no apology. They took money for services never rendered, and left us in silence. And now this? A senator, denied surgery and left to die for the same reason — money before medicine? Let me ask you, dear reader: Can you believe that in 2025, in Nigeria's capital, a former senator was allowed to die over a medical bill? Can you imagine the fate of an ordinary citizen with no title, no connections, no camera to record their pain? Can we continue pretending we are a functioning nation when even the powerful now fall to the very rot they helped create?

This Isn't Just a Tragedy. It's a National Indictment. Senator Kontagora's death is not only heartbreaking — it is a mirror held to our faces. It reflects a healthcare system that is brutal, broken, and built on greed. If a senator — someone who helped shape Nigeria's laws — can die from lack of payment, then we are all potential victims waiting for our turn.

His Story Is Not Alone. April 2025 – Lagos: A pregnant woman bled to death at a hospital's reception when her husband couldn't pay ₦500,000 deposit. The medical staff refused to act. 2023 – Jos: A 5-year-old boy with malaria died after several hospitals turned him away for having “no bed space” and “no oxygen”.

2022 – Abuja: A schoolteacher passed out. She needed urgent blood transfusion. The hospital refused to proceed until payment was made in full, even as she slipped away. These are not exceptions. They are evidence of a collapsing conscience in our medical and governance systems.

What Civilized Nations Do. In the UK, emergency care is free at the point of use. No human being is asked for money while dying. In Germany, universal health insurance ensures all

emergencies are covered, with no hospital legally allowed to reject critical care.

In Canada, healthcare is seen as a social duty, not a financial transaction.

Even in South Africa, emergency rooms are required to stabilize patients first before asking about bills.

But in Nigeria? We treat sickness like a business. We treat life like a line item. We treat people like numbers. And now, we're paying the price — in deaths. Who Is Doing This to Us?

Who is responsible for this carnage? Is it neocolonialism, hiding behind IMF and World Bank policies, that push our leaders to remove subsidies on healthcare and fuel, while maintaining these same subsidies in their own countries? Or is it our own complicit elite, who'd rather build medical tourism budgets for themselves than fund hospitals for the people? Or maybe, just maybe — it is us, the people, who have become too accustomed to suffering. Too tolerant of silence. Too used to dying quietly. When shall we wake up to demand leadership that

sees hospitals not as contracts but sanctuaries of life? When shall we say enough is enough — and hold rulers accountable for every grave dug from their failure to lead?

The Kontagora Case Must Be a Turning Point. We must never again let a citizen — elite or ordinary — die over hospital fees.

We must demand: A law guaranteeing emergency care for all, regardless of ability to pay.

Refund and regulation for hospitals demanding advance payments on future services.

Mandatory use of public hospitals by political officeholders, or no access to foreign care.

Real health insurance reform, not the ghost framework that enriches a few.

May His Death Not Be in Vain. May Allah forgive Senator Ibrahim Musa Kontagora and all who have died under this brutal, heartless system. But let us not waste his death. Let us not scroll past another headline and return to our silence. Because Nigeria did not just happen to him. Nigeria is happening to all of us. We are in a nation where life is conditional on bank alerts, where healthcare is gated by transfer receipts, and where systems built by the elite are now killing them too. It's Time to Risk. We are not asking for luxury. We are asking for life. We are not demanding miracles. We are demanding morality. We must build a Nigeria where: Health is a right, not a privilege. Doctors take oaths seriously, not with bank balances in mind. Hospitals become centers of healing, not centers of wealth extraction.

If we don't rise now, tomorrow it might be your name trending — not because of your achievements, but because you died waiting for care you already paid for

