

Nine soldiers face questioning over unsolved murder of Kenyan mother

INVESTIGATION

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Nine British soldiers are to be questioned by Kenyan detectives about the unsolved murder of a 21-year-old mother nine years ago.

Agnes Wanjiru, who had a daughter aged just five months, was found stabbed to death at a hotel near a UK army base in Nanyuki, Kenya, in 2012.

Four witnesses told police they saw Wanjiru, a prostitute, leaving the hotel bar with a British soldier and entering a room with him. A porter later overheard a “fierce row” in the room.

Two months later Wanjiru’s body was found in a septic tank in the grounds of the hotel. By then the soldiers had left the country.

Last week soldiers who were at the hotel that night spoke about a “lost weekend” in Nanyuki when the British Army released hundreds of personnel from a base for what turned into a three-day bender involving mass brawls, binge drinking and sex with local women.

Military police officers dispatched to break up fights between regiments were “hurled off balconies”.

The night Agnes vanished, the Lions Court Hotel had descended into debauchery, according to soldiers and local women. Prostitutes were going into huts for orgies with soldiers in exchange for a few pounds, according to one soldier present.

He claimed that there were 60 soldiers in the hotel, partying with “about 40 sex workers”. “When we got back they [the army] made us get mass-tested for HIV,” he said.

The nine murder suspects were identified from the hotel’s check-in records. None was questioned or

asked to provide a DNA sample, despite requests from the Kenyan police. The Ministry of Defence said it had seen no such requests but had helped with preliminary inquiries.

It has now confirmed it is assisting the Kenyan authorities “to determine what support is needed” in a new investigation of Wanjiru’s murder, which is being led by Nairobi’s directorate of criminal investigations.

Kenyan detectives visited Wanjiru’s family in Nanyuki in February and interviewed witnesses.

Speaking for the first time since the murder, Rose Wanyua Wanjiku, 48, who has raised her sister’s daughter Stacy, 9, said: “She was in the company of some British soldiers. I believe they were responsible. Her case has been completely overlooked. From the first day we reported the case at the police station, the police did nothing until her body was accidentally recovered from a septic tank.”

An MoD spokesman said: “Following the judgment of an inquest reached in 2019, we are aware that the Kenyan authorities are looking into this incident.”
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