

Sacrifice of a Child by Using a Gunshot: Complicity between a Father and His Son in Mali

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Abstract: Murder with firearm for sacrifice purpose is uncommon in Mali. It is a violence which can cause either the death of the victim or cause to him serious damages. We report the case of a primary school boy aged 14 years old who was shot by the son of his host after his father command him to do so. The victim was seriously injured by the bullets and was taken to the Institute of African Tropical Ophthalmology. He eventually lost both eyes. The attacker and his father were prosecuted.

Keywords: Murder, Firearm, Sacrifice

INTRODUCTION

Violence has been identified as a pandemic by the World Health Organization. Weapons, particularly firearms, play a significant role in violence not only in countries that are engaged in military conflicts, but also in countries that are considered peaceful. Although the surveillance data is uneven at best, the total mortality from firearms is believed to exceed 500,000 deaths per year worldwide [1]. Intentional injury has been defined as maltreatment caused by an action or omission meant to cause harm to the victim or done deliberately [2]. Firearm related injuries are defined as those associated with guns that use a powder charge to fire a projectile [3]. Murder for sacrifice purpose is rare in Mali which is a monotheist country populated mainly by Muslim.

CASE REPORT

We report the case of a primary school boy aged 14 years old who was shot by the son of his host. The assault happened on May 18th, 2013; while they were heading for the farm, the father of the attacker took his traditional gun with many projectiles inside. When they reached the farm, the old man handed over the gun to his son and moved several miles away in order to fulfill his occultism. Suddenly, his son of 19 years old began enchantment and informed the victim of his intent to sacrifice him. Before the small boy reply, he found himself lying on the ground because of the gunshot. When he was screaming, the neighborhood farmers came and rescued him. The judiciary was informed and legal proceedings were brought against

the attacker for attempt of murder but also against his father for complicity of attempt of murder. An expertise was requested by the judge. The clinical findings were: the presence of multiple bullet entries on both eyes with hemorrhage and swelling. There was powder "tattooing" around the entrance sites. The visual acuity was NPL (non perception of light) both eyes, otherwise a bilateral incurable blindness. An orbital-cranial computed tomography (CT) was performed and shown the presence of bullets in the orbital cavities. The victim was then examined and operated under general anesthesia by an ophthalmologist. Under the operating microscope, the ophthalmologist found: a scleral wound of the right eye which he sutured, and a burst of the left eye which he eviscerated. There was no exit wound, the bullets were inside the orbit; and were removed (one in the right orbit, and two in the left). He was discharged three weeks later. The findings of the final examination were: blindness in both eyes. The temporary work incapacity was 20 days. The attacker was declared psychologically healthy but were raised by a violent father after an expertise conducted by a legal psychologist; despite, he was finally discharged on bail along with his father after two months of custody.

DISCUSSION

The case presented here is very rare in our society. Mali is a peaceful country where, muslims and Christians live in harmony. Murders or attempt of murders are not common like in other countries. In 2005, according to the Centre for Disease Control of the United States of America (USA) there were 12 337

homicides and 69 825 non-fatal injuries caused by firearms [4]. The USA has a higher homicide rate than other developed nations, and most of the murders are committed with firearms [5]. In developed countries, violence is increasing and people have easy access to firearms. Injuries and the law are connected in many important ways. The law can be a powerful tool for reducing the risk of injury [6]. The World Health Organization World Report on Violence and Health urges member nations to examine the impact of intentional injury and develop strategies to reduce violence [7]. In our case, the judiciary was unfair by releasing these delinquents. Instead of being a tool for fighting injuries it failed and even encouraged the murderers. An intentional attack with a firearm in order to kill a human being is a felony regardless its outcome according to the criminal code of Mali; such a person must face a trial before the court of assizes which deals with murderer and can even be sentenced to life prison or to death prison [8].



Fig. 1: The victim 1 day after the gunshot



Fig. 2: The victim 3 weeks after the gunshot

CONCLUSION

The attempt of murder is a crime regardless the injuries which may occur. This case which resulted in blindness is particularly awful. The behavior of the judiciary is blamable and needs to be changed in order to discourage people from violence.

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