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Paying Lobola When My Wife Dies: An African Pastoral Study about the Practice of Forcing People to Pay Lobola After Their Wives Passed Away

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ABSTRACT While African people view lobola as a way of ensuring that families come together to agree, witness and accept that their family member is married, some use the same tradition to generate income. Just as lobola cements marriage traditionally, those who avoid lobola are made to pay when the situation forces them to. There are several cases where the death of the woman or girl who lived with a man without being married according to the lobolo custom brought an issue of the forceful payment of lobolo, as a condition to allow the burial to take place by the parents (family) of the female. Besides scaring the young males and females who seem to ignore the importance of lobolo agreement when marrying, the practice also had its own unintended effects on the male and his family. The intention as well as the gist of this article is not only to argue that African people should respect the tradition by agreeing on the lobolo issue to avoid an unexpected forced payment, but also to try to check how pastoral caregivers and the Christian church come in to assist those who will negatively be affected by the practice.