

Rivers: Tragedy As Boy Drowns In Community River



By **Anayo Onukwugha** 43 Minutes Ago in **News**

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Tragedy struck at the weekend when a 16-year-old boy drowned while swimming with friends in a river in the Ogoloma community, Okrika local government area of Rivers State.

The deceased, identified as Miebaka Koko, reportedly went swimming with three of his friends at Derock Waterside in Ogoloma when a strong water current swept him away.

Eyewitnesses said the victim's friends quickly ran out of the water to seek help after realising that he was in distress.

Speaking to journalists, the Sector Commander of the Civilian Joint Task Force in Okrika LGA, Igwe Godswill, attributed the incident to the increased depth of the river caused by dredging activities in the area.

"Companies have dredged almost all the waterfront areas in the Okrika Local Government Area. The dredging has made the river much deeper. Just a step away from the riverbank can be dangerously deep.

"At about 1:30 p.m. yesterday, four boys left the community and went to Derock Waterside in Ogoloma to swim.

"They entered the water, and shortly afterwards, we saw the boys running out. A woman was also shouting for help. We rushed to the scene with another man and tried to rescue the boy. At one point, we could only see his hands above the water.

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"However, the current was very strong, and the man who attempted to rescue him could not reach him. Unfortunately, the boy drowned. It is very painful, Goodwill said.

He noted that recovering bodies from rivers in the area is often difficult and can take several days.

"If you are from this part of Rivers State, you will know that when someone drowns in our rivers, it often takes two or three days before the body can be recovered," he added.

Godswill urged parents to caution their children against swimming in unsafe areas and to monitor their movements closely.

"I advise parents to warn their children about where they swim. Most of our rivers have been dredged and are now very dangerous. Parents should also keep track of where their children go," Godswill said.

The task force commander further disclosed that security personnel, including a police officer and soldiers from Sector 3, witnessed the incident.

When contacted, the spokesperson of the State Command, Blessing Agabe, said that although the boy's relatives had lodged no formal complaint, the Police were aware of the incident and had commenced an investigation.

Agabe, an Assistant Superintendent of Police, stated, "Well, the family has not made any report to the Police. So we encourage them to do that for us to commence proper investigation and determine the circumstances surrounding the incident."