

News

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Tragedy in Delta as truck runs over six-year-old schoolgirl



The death of a school pupil after she was run over by a construction tipper truck on her way from school has left residents in shock. Elo Edremoda visited the family on Friday and reports.

Not in the wildest imagination of Oghenekome's parents and siblings did they think they would be mourning her so soon when they celebrated her birth six years ago.

She was the apple of the eyes of every family member because of her likeable nature. She was said to have exuded so much brilliance at her young age as to draw admirers at home, school and in the neighbourhood.

Popularly called Kome, the smart, lively and intelligent last of three children was full of life until tragedy struck as she was returning from school on last Monday. Kome was hit by a Julius Berger branded construction tipper truck and she died instantly.

On that fateful day, the happy go lucky girl had woken up like she did every other day. She got herself prepared and headed for Andrew Millers Nursery and Primary School on MCC Road, Enerhen, a community in Uvwie Local Government Area, **Delta State**, led, as usual, by her 10-year-old sister, Glory.

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After school hours, the duo began the usual walk back to their mother's shop. Unfortunately, Kome never made it home. Something was said to have fallen from her hand as they were walking home. The little girl bent down to pick it, oblivious of the advancing lorry.

Before her elder sister knew what was going on, the lorry had knocked down the poor girl and run over her, killing her instantly.

Further details of the circumstances of her death were hard to obtain in spite of the efforts made by the reporter. Some traders approached around the scene of the accident said they were not present when it occurred that Monday evening.

The construction firm, Julius Berger, have recently been carrying out intensive work on the road as part of the Enerhen Junction flyover project aimed at linking a drainage system to the nearby Warri River.

At the family house, Kome's mother, Joy Edeburu, a nurse, sat outside surrounded by friends and neighbours who had only good things to say about the departed girl.

Mrs. Edeburu, who looked like a woman in her late 30s, rarely spoke. One of the family friends identified simply as Tega said until Thursday, there had been no word from the construction company.

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A hair stylist among the distraught mother's sympathisers said they were appalled that by the following day, the company had resumed work at the construction site.

Another mourner said the community's leadership had earlier claimed that the company concerned had settled the family. Hence, nobody should interfere with the construction work.

She said it was these postures from both the company and community that forced the friends and neighbours to embark on a protest that went viral on social media and forced officials of the company to schedule a meeting with the bereaved family.

Asked about the truck's driver, she said she gathered that he was arrested.

"We heard that as he got down from the truck and saw what had happened, he urinated in his pants. He didn't run," another sympathiser added.

Glory in trauma

Kome's 10-year old elder sister, Glory was said to be traumatised and in dire need of therapy after seen her younger sister crushed by the truck. "She has not been herself. She keeps blaming herself for not holding Kome back, saying she ought to have done better.

"She is having sleeping paralysis and has been taken to her aunt's place, away from here," Tega said.

School honours Kome

As a result of the painful incident, the school's management suspended activities for the whole week in honour of their late pupil.

Oghenekome, translated as 'God gives/gave me,' will remain a shining light in the heart of all who knew her in her short time on earth.