

Medical negligence killed my son in Lagos hospital — Chimamanda Adichie

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File photo: Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

| By Christabel Ndoeche

Renowned Nigerian author, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, has alleged medical negligence in the circumstances surrounding the death of her 21-month-old son, Nkanu Nnamdi, who died on Wednesday, January 7, 2026.

ARISE News reported on Saturday that it reached out to Adichie's media team, who confirmed she authored the statement detailing the incident. According to her representatives, the message was originally sent privately to family members and a few close friends.

In the statement, Adichie said her son was taken to Euracare Hospital for an MRI scan and the insertion of a central line, during which he was sedated but was not properly monitored after being administered propofol, leading to complications including loss of responsiveness, seizures, and cardiac arrest.

She stated that her son "would be alive today if not for an incident at Euracare Hospital on January 6th," where he was taken for medical procedures.

Adichie explained that her family had been in Lagos for Christmas when her son developed what they initially believed was a cold, which later "turned into a very serious infection."

"We were in Lagos for Christmas. Nkanu had what we first thought was just a cold, but soon turned into a very serious infection, and he was admitted to Atlantis Hospital.

“He was to travel to the US the next day, January 7th, accompanied by travelling doctors. A team at Johns Hopkins was waiting to receive him in Baltimore. The Hopkins team had asked for a lumbar puncture test and an MRI,” she said.

According to her, Atlantis Hospital referred them to Euracare Hospital, “which was said to be the best place to have the procedures done.”

“The Nigerian team had also decided to put in a ‘central line’ (used to administer IV medications) in preparation for Nkanu’s flight. The morning of the 6th, we left Atlantis Hospital for Euracare, Nkanu carried in his father’s arms.

“We were told he would need to be sedated to prevent him from moving during the MRI and the ‘central line’ procedure. I was waiting just outside the theatre. I saw people, including Dr M, rushing into the theatre and immediately knew something had happened,” she stated.

Adichie said she was later told her son had been administered an excessive dose of propofol by the anesthesiologist.

“A short time later, Dr M came out and told me Nkanu had been given too much propofol by the anesthesiologist, had become unresponsive and was quickly resuscitated,” she said.

She stated that her son was subsequently placed on a ventilator, intubated, and admitted to the intensive care unit, after which he developed seizures and suffered cardiac arrest.

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“But suddenly, Nkanu was on a ventilator; he was intubated and placed in the ICU. The next thing I heard was that he had seizures. Cardiac arrest. All these had never happened before. Some hours later, Nkanu was gone,” she said.

Adichie further alleged that her son was not monitored after being sedated and described the anesthesiologist’s actions as criminally negligent.

“It turns out that Nkanu was never monitored after being given too much propofol. The anesthesiologist had just casually carried Nkanu on his shoulder to the theatre, so nobody knows when exactly Nkanu

became unresponsive.

“How can you sedate a sick child and neglect to monitor him? Later, after the ‘central line’ procedure, the anesthesiologist casually switched off Nkanu’s oxygen and again decided to carry him on his shoulder to the ICU!

“The anesthesiologist was CRIMINALLY negligent. He was fatally casual and careless with the precious life of a child. No proper protocol was followed.”

She said the family brought in “a child who was unwell but stable and scheduled to travel the next day” for what she described as “basic procedures,” but lost him unexpectedly.

“And suddenly, our beautiful little boy was gone forever. It is like living your worst nightmare. I will never survive the loss of my child,” she said.

Adichie also alleged that they later learned of previous incidents involving the same anesthesiologist.

“We have now heard about two previous cases of this same anesthesiologist overdosing children. Why did Euracare allow him to keep working?” she asked, adding, “This must never happen to another child.”

Our correspondent reached out to Euracare Hospital for comment, and a spokesperson responded briefly: “Whatever information you need, you get it between us and Chimamanda. Thank you”

PUNCH Online had earlier reported that the 21-month-old died after a brief illness. Following the announcement of his death, several prominent Nigerians, including President Bola Tinubu, former Vice President Atiku Abubakar, and former presidential candidate Peter Obi, expressed condolences to Adichie and her family.