

Lagos failed us after my 11-year-old son fell from school building – Bereaved father

March 8, 2026 12:10 am



Late David. Photo: Ayoola Olasupo.

By Ayoola Olasupo

Mr Oluwaseun Elijah tells AYOOLA OLASUPO about how his 11-year-old son, David, died after falling from the second floor of a school building in Akowonjo, Lagos State, the family's desperate bid to save him, the N5m surgery demand, alleged official inaction, and the heartbreak of burying a child

What is your relationship with David?

David was my second son. I had two sons. My first son is Emmanuel, while David was the second child.

How old was he?

He was 11 years and two months old when he died. He was supposed to be 12 years old this year.

Can you tell us about what happened to him?

David attended a junior secondary school in Egbeda, Lagos State, and also attended a community school in Akowonjo. What happened that day was that I was at home when they called me from his school, and I was told that David was rushed to Crystal Hospital at Akowonjo. It was on Friday, December 5, 2025.

When I saw the boy, he was injured in the leg and the mouth, and the medical doctor said we should go and look for at least N5m to do surgery for him. We spent the little money we had that day and wrote to

the Lagos State Government for assistance. We even wrote to our church, but we did not get anything from them.

So, they rushed David to the Lagos State University Teaching Hospital in Ikeja. From December 5 to December 21, we had been spending money to save our son, so we wrote a letter to the Lagos State Secretariat in Alausa to assist us. Till now, we haven't heard anything until David gave up on January 19, 2026, and we had to bury him that day, too. Until this moment, we have not seen anything from the government.

How much did you spend on his treatment?

Since the day the incident happened till when he gave up, we had been buying a lot of drugs from the hospital. I still have some of the receipts with me. When they said they wanted to do surgery for him, we did not have the money, so we ran around to seek assistance.

Can you remember maybe a rough estimate of how much you spent?

To the extent I can remember now, at least we had spent almost N800,000, and we were asked to bring N5m for the surgery.

What did they say happened to David exactly?

I was told that David got injured when he fell from the second floor of their school's two-storey building.

Did someone push him before he fell through the window?

They said they were playing during break time, and it was some classmates who pushed him. During the break time, they used to play around, so the classmate who pushed him through the window was playing with him. The window did not have burglar-proof, and it was on the second floor. That school is a public school in Akowonjo, and David was already in SS2.

How did you receive the message that David had been rushed to the hospital?

At that moment, I was scared that I even cut the call. So, the second time they called me again, I asked them. 'What happened to David?' That was because when David left home that Friday, he was well and sound, and nothing was wrong with him. They asked me to come and see for myself, and immediately I called my wife to inform her about what I was told.

She was scared and asked about what happened to him. When we got to the hospital and they said we could not see him, I said, 'Why?' We were shocked. So, from Crystal Hospital, where they rushed him to, we were referred to LASUTH because the injuries were severe and could not be handled at the first hospital.

They attended to us at LASUTH and asked us to pay for an X-ray. We did X-rays for his neck, chest, and head, and we were the ones who spent all the money for the X-rays. The principal stayed with me at that time; he gave us close to N200,000.

The principal was also scared about what happened to David, and doubted whether he would survive it. But he kept on praying, and when we ran out of assistance, we wrote to the Lagos State Government, appealing for assistance.

I had to take my son away from the hospital because they weren't attending to us. They said we did not have the money they requested. That was the reason I took my son away from the last hospital.

Do you think it was necessary for your son to be taken out of the hospital to another place?

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The principal wrote a letter to Alausa, and they said he should provide the receipts with the LASUTH logo before they could provide the money. The doctors also told us that they wouldn't do anything because they were also on strike, and that the government needed to pay them some money. That was the issue we had. They said if they weren't on strike, they would have attended to David.

Which ministry did you address the letter to?

We wrote a letter to the Lagos State Governor, Babajide Sanwo-Olu. They stamped it after receiving it, but they did not say anything. So, that explained why we did not receive anything from the governor and the Ministry of Education, even till David passed on.

Did a government representative visit to sympathise with the family?

No. We have not received anything from them. They told me that they would come and pay us a visit. So, that was what a government official said to me last. She said they would pay us a visit, and that they were sorry.

Has he been buried?

Yes. He had to be buried at the time we buried him because they said we should bury him that day. He died early on Monday morning. When the family started crying and running up and down, we were asked to bury him. He was buried in a cemetery at Ayobo.

How is David's mum currently coping with the trauma?

Sometimes, she would say that it was as if she was seeing the boy, but I would just tell her that David is gone already and she won't be able to see him again. We are just trying our best to take care of her as much as possible, and provide anything she needs at the moment, as a woman, because sometimes she demands drugs. So, we took her to the hospital, where some drugs were given to her. At least, she's getting better now.

Does that mean that she is having some psychological issues?

Yes, and sometimes she does not get better. We need to take her to the hospital. Medical workers are the ones taking care of her and they gave her the drugs she's using.

Are you satisfied with the way David's matter was handled by the school authority, the hospital and the government?

We are not satisfied because the government ought to compensate us because when David started the school, they asked us to pay tax and we paid tax. Then, David also attended the school every day.

So, they are supposed to compensate us as a family, pay us a visit for the loss because we had only two sons. I have the firstborn, Emmanuel, and the second child was David, who was very gentle. He didn't like making any trouble at all, and he was an obedient child. So, they were supposed to compensate us as a family.

Have the students who pushed David out of the window been identified?

They identified the family. They even came to our house, stayed with us, cried with us, and also felt what we are feeling. So, what can we do? People tried to arrest them, but they cried and begged. Some people said you should not do that because at least they sympathised with us. As Christians, we had to leave them.

Do you think adequate justice will be served for you in this case?

We're just hoping for anything that can help or assist us. We want the government to pity us and see the condition we are in now. There is agony in our family right now, so at least they should pity the present condition that we are passing through.

What do you do for a living?

I paint houses and also do designs. David's mum does a small business.

Had David ever complained about safety issues in the school before this tragedy?

Well, David had never complained about anything because what I discovered in the school was that their teachers were supposed to caution them. That is one major issue that we have because one day, David complained that they pushed him just like this. But that one was inside their class.

The students like rough play. I felt that the teachers were supposed to fulfil their responsibilities to all the students. The day the incident happened, David did not complain about anything. He was feeling fine and very healthy until that thing happened to him, and he eventually passed on January 19.

What we want the government to do for us now is that my first son, Emmanuel, is still attending the school, and they should look into our family to assist us in any way possible because David is dead now and cannot be seen again.

| Ayoola Olasupo