

# Cross River actor killed by cannon at rehearsal

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The deceased, Michael Obeten. Photo: Facebook

Olaoluwa Alo

An actor, identified as Michael Obeten, has died after a cannon malfunctioned and struck him during a Good Friday drama rehearsal in Ugep, Yakurr Local Government Area of Cross River State.

*PUNCH Metro* learnt on Monday that Obeten, who had previously played the role of Jesus Christ in past editions of the ‘Passion Play’, was allegedly coaching younger actors when the tragic incident occurred.

The accident reportedly happened at Station 12 of the rehearsal, where a locally made cannon, known as “oginigbo” and used to simulate thunder effects, malfunctioned and hit him on the head.

According to CrossRiverWatch on Wednesday, the 2007 Mass Communication Alumni Group of the University of Cross Rivers, in a statement signed by one Lesoda-Ada, said the device was handled by unlicensed individuals.

“The blast reportedly sent debris flying, striking Obeten in the head and leaving him with severe brain injuries,” the statement read.

Obeten was rushed for medical treatment and scheduled for emergency surgery, but later died from his injuries.

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The incident has sparked calls for stricter safety regulations at public events. The alumni group described his death as “tragic and avoidable,” adding, “Mike Obeten was more than a classmate. He was a leader, a unifier, and a friend to many. His death was entirely preventable.”

They called for a full investigation, prosecution of those responsible, and a ban on the use of firearms and cannons at public gatherings unless handled by licensed professionals.

Confirming the incident via WhatsApp to our correspondent, the state Police Public Relations Officer, ASP Sunday Akata, said the matter had been reported, but noted that no official complaint had been lodged at the Yakurr Division.

He stated, “The incident was reported to have occurred; however, no official report was made to the Police Division at Yakurr.

“Furthermore, preliminary findings from inquiries in the area indicate—based on information from an anonymous source—that Obeten was allegedly buried on 7th April 2026 after he passed away while receiving treatment at a hospital, believed to be in Abakaliki.”