

Father demands probe of Rivers cleric, hospital over teenage girl's death

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The Rivers State Commissioner of Police, Olugbenga Adepoju

By Dennis Naku

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A resident of the Diobu area of Port Harcourt City Local Government Area, Kehinde Ajibade, has called on the Rivers State Police Command to investigate the circumstances surrounding the death of his 16-year-old daughter at a private hospital in the state.

Ajibade said his daughter, Favour Ajibade, an SS2 student of Orugbum Community Secondary School, Port Harcourt, died on May 13, 2026, under suspicious circumstances.

Speaking with journalists in Port Harcourt on Tuesday, the grieving father alleged that his daughter died while under the care of a cleric whom he accused of taking custody of her against his wishes.

He said he was devastated to learn of his daughter's death barely two days after seeing her at school without any visible sign of illness.

Ajibade said, "Favour had been living with her spiritual father, a pastor who runs a ministry from his residence. On May 11, I went to her school to pay her fees.

"The vice principal called her out for me, and we spoke. I paid her school fees and left. There was no report that she was ill. But on May 13, I received a call from the hospital informing me that my daughter was sick and that they needed my attention.

“Before I could get there, my daughter had already died. I had repeatedly asked the man to release my daughter to me, but he refused.”

Fighting back tears, Ajibade further claimed that his daughter’s behaviour changed after she started attending the pastor’s church in 2025.

According to him, repeated appeals to the pastor and his wife to allow the teenager to return home were ignored.

He called on the Inspector-General of Police, the Rivers State Commissioner of Police and the State Criminal Investigation and Intelligence Department to ensure a thorough investigation into the matter and secure justice for his daughter.

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“That man is a spiritual leader. Something happened to my daughter. Her behaviour changed. She was always observing dry fasting because her spiritual father instructed her to do so. I believe this contributed to her death.

“I initially reported the matter to the police, but I was not satisfied with the way it was handled. Instead, there were attempts to persuade me to settle the matter. I later transferred the case to the State CID, but I still felt the matter was not properly addressed.

“I want justice for my daughter. I am calling on the Inspector-General of Police to intervene because my daughter cannot die like this,” he said.

Meanwhile, a civil rights advocate, Samuel Robinson, said civil society groups had written to the state commissioner of police, urging the command not to allow the matter to be swept under the carpet.

Robinson alleged that the pastor’s wife had been mounting pressure on the bereaved father to accept a settlement but said the family was demanding justice instead.

“So we are calling on the authorities, including the Inspector-General of Police and the Commissioner of Police, to thoroughly investigate this matter and ensure that anyone found culpable is brought to justice,” he said.

“You cannot keep a minor for such a long period despite repeated requests from the parents for her release, and now the child is dead, while the cause of death remains unclear. The family deserves justice.”

When contacted on Tuesday, the spokesperson for the Rivers State Police Command, Blessing Agabe, confirmed that the command had received a report on the incident and that the investigation was ongoing.

Agabe dismissed claims that the matter was not being properly handled, insisting that the command was treating the case with the seriousness it deserved.

“We are aware of the matter, and the investigation is ongoing. It is a serious issue, and we are handling it accordingly,” she stated.