

Fast-rising Nigerian singer, Ifunanya dies after snake bite in Abuja



Aspiring singer Ifunanya Nwangene has died from a snake bite in the capital, Abuja, on Saturday.

Nwangene, 26, gained national attention after appearing on The Voice Nigeria in 2021 and was known for blending jazz, opera, classical music and soul.

Videos circulating online show a snake handler removing a snake from her home as bystanders screamed: “It is a cobra!”

Confirming her death via a social media post, Amemuso Choir which the deceased was a member of, said Nwangene would be “deeply missed”.

“Amemuso Choir regrets to announce the sudden demise of our beloved soprano Ifunanya Nwangene who passed away yesterday, 31st January 2026 at Federal Medical Centre due to a snake bite,” the statement reads.

“A rising star, Ifunanya was at the cusp of sharing her incredible talent with the world. Her voice and spirit will be deeply missed.”

A close friend, Sam Ezugwu, co-founder and music director of the Amemuso Choir, told the BBC that Nwangene was a “rising star” who had been planning her first solo concert later this year. She was also a trained architect.

Another friend, Hillary Obinna, said she had been asleep when “the snake bite woke her up”, adding that two snakes were later found in the house.

Nwangene initially sought help at a nearby clinic, but was referred to a hospital due to a lack of antivenom. Ezugwu said the hospital had one of the required antivenoms but not the other.

“While they were trying to stabilise her, she could not speak but she could make hand gestures. She was struggling to breathe,” he said.

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Ezugwu said he left to search for the missing antivenom but returned to find she had died. The BBC has contacted the hospital for comment.

He added that the choir gathered at the hospital that evening, “hoping that a miracle would happen”.

Obinna described Nwangene as “a very wonderful girl, she is humble – very intelligent and very talented”, adding: “Everybody is shattered. We could not

sleep at night.”