

# IN-DEPTH

## Disquiet as authorities yet to act on FGC Kwali student's death

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There seems to be a conspiratorial silence since the untimely death of a 13-year-old student at the Federal Government College (FGC) Kwali in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT).

Two weeks after the death of Yahaya Nuhu Aliyu, a Junior Secondary School (JSS) II student, the authorities are yet to act decisively to unravel the cause of death of the boy and serve justice.

Aliyu, who is said to be the grandson of a former Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF), late Aliyu Mohammed, allegedly died after being punished by his teacher for failing to do his English Language assignment.

His death, penultimate Monday, sparked protest by his schoolmates who said it was the negligence of the school that ended his life.

Yet, over two weeks after, neither the school management nor the Federal Ministry of Education has come out with a verdict on how the boy died in their custody.

The police too are yet to act on the incident.

However, when asked whether negligence can be inferred in the incident, Barr Amarachi Ufomba, a gender and child's rights advocate, said such can only be applied based on the provisions of the relevant professional bodies - the Medical and Dental Council of Nigeria or the Teachers' Registration Council - laws.

"It is on the basis of such professional laws that any court action, whether civil or criminal can be commenced," she said.

Also speaking, Chinelo Ogbozor (Esq) said in such cases, criminal neglect may be difficult to establish if the victim was a day student, but added that tort actions like assault could be adduced if the child was actually beaten by the teacher.

"The whole thing is that the society must change the orientation that beating is the only way of raising or correcting a child," she said.

Facts about the incident were sketchy as the school tried to hush it up but a source in the school identified the teacher who punished the late student as Dorcas Gibson.

She allegedly used the iron handle of a bucket to hit the student on his head for failing to do his assignment.



■ Students at the entrance of the college

Though there were different versions of the incident, the college management could not be reached for comments.

Our reporter attempted to speak with the principal of the college, Dahiru Shehu but was not successful as security men at the entrance said no journalist was allowed to enter the college.

Two police patrol vehicles were stationed in front of the college gate with armed policemen keeping guard.

However, sources claimed the college management told the bereaved family that their son died while on admission at Rhema Hospital in Kwali, as a result of cerebral malaria.

"The boy, according to what I learnt, had been sick for some time and he could not come to the class or report to anybody, until that Monday when he was asked to bring his homework as others were submitting theirs but he (Aliyu) could not and the teacher decided to reprimand him," the source said.

The Etsu of Kwali, Alhaji Shaban Audu Nizazo, told our reporter that he was informed that a student of the college died as a result of cerebral malaria while on admission at a hospital in Kwali.

He said he was yet to get details about the circumstances surrounding the death of the student, even as he called on the government to provide standard health facilities across all federal government colleges in the country.

The Federal Ministry of

Education issued a statement to confirm the death of the student and to announce the setting up of a committee to look into the circumstances surrounding it. It hasn't gone further than that.

The Director, Press and Public Relations, Ben Bem Goong, in the statement said the ministry sent a letter of condolence to the family and also paid a visit.

"A committee has been set up to look into the circumstances of Master Nuhu's death, even as the ministry awaits the medical report from the hospital in the coming days," he said.

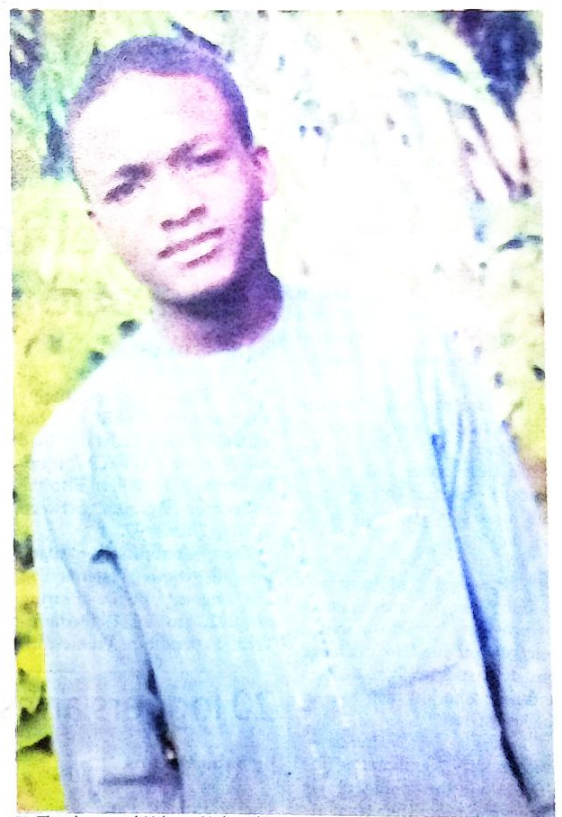
He, however, called on members of the public, including the media, to avoid speculations on the cause of death of the boy.

Daily Trust visited Rhema Hospital to ascertain the cause of Aliyu's death but the medical director, Dr. Mathias Agama Igbemi, declined to speak with our reporter saying he could not comment until our reporter presented a clearance from the college management, police, or family of the deceased.

The spokesperson of the FCT police command, ASP Maryam Yusuf, replied to a text message sent to her to confirm the incident saying, "We are investigating please."

But as the silence continued, the parents and the public are waiting to know how Nuhu died.

Speaking with our reporter on phone, the mother said they were yet to receive any report from either the Ministry of



■ The deceased, Yahaya Nuhu Aliyu

Education or the management of the college.

She spoke briefly with our reporter through telephone yesterday, saying they were still waiting for the report to know the next step to take.

"Actually, since the incident

happened, we have not received any report from either the Ministry of Education or the management of the college. The father is still in Abuja so we are waiting for him before the family will make its position known," she said.