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Controversy trails death of four kids in Taraba

From Charles Akpeji, Jalingo

TRAGEDY struck in Jalingo, the Taraba State capital, as four children died of suffocation.

The children, whose ages ranged from four to six years, were said to have been trapped in a car at Sabo-Laye in Jalingo.

A source said the children's whereabouts became a source of worry to their parents on Wednesday, which led to the immediate dispatch of search parties.

After a thorough search, according to the source who spoke with The Guardian, the four children "were found dead inside this car" (pointing to a Honda 98 model).

The incident attracted sympathisers from the neighbourhood.

There were, however, different explanations on the circumstances that led to their death as some of the people within the neighbourhood believed that the death was ritually-motivated.

According to a neighbour of the victims, the notion that the children died of suffocation "is a big lie".

She could not fathom why such grown up children could be trapped in such a car without "any of us hearing their cries. So I think all those stories of suffocation are just aimed at deviating from the real issue.

"You tell me, in this highly populated area of ours, is there any way a child, not to talk of four of them, would be trapped in that car without crying out? Why did we not see them while searching yesterday only to be confronted with this ugly situation this morning?"

When contacted, the Police Commissioner, who spoke through his deputy, Usman I. Baba, said: "As soon as we get the whole detail, we shall commence investigations into the matter".

The police, he said, were informed that the children died of suffocation because "we learnt that after they gained entry into the car, which has been parked for the past three days, they were unable to find their way out".

He also confirmed that the dead children were discovered when a friend of the owner of the car brought in a battery to kick the car, which he said, had been fully covered "for some days".

Should any foul play be uncovered, the law of the land, he said, would surely descend on whoever was involved in the hideous act.

Some parents of the deceased children who gave their names as Nasir Mohammed and Aliyu Abubakar, said they had left the tragic incident in the hands of the "Almighty Allah".



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When asked if they were going to institute a legal action against the owner of the house where the children were found dead, they said: "We are not going to do anything but we believe Allah has taken control".

"Moreover, may be that is how Allah has destined that they will leave this world. So, we believe their death was the will of Allah. If not, they would have been alive till date", they added.

Though the parents had prepared their bodies for burial, the police quickly intercepted by taking them to the morgue, stating that an autopsy would be carried out.

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