
Day-old baby dumped in refuse bin dies after neglect by neighbours

By Ann Godwin (Port Harcourt)

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Residents yesterday woke up to see a baby wrapped in a white cloth and abandoned at the middle of the road among heaps of refuse.

An unknown person suspected to be a single mother had allegedly dropped the one-day old baby in front of St. Thomas Anglican Church, Mile 2 Diobu, in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The baby died after three hours of neglect by residents.

Eyewitnesses said the baby was dropped off the previous night. The situation created panic among residents and business operators at the popular Ikoku auto spare parts market in Port Harcourt. It was gathered that extreme cold witnessed in the early hours of the day might have led to the death of the baby.

According to an onlooker, who does not want his name in print, the fear of arrest by the police prevented people from rescuing him. He disclosed that the baby showed signs of life but regretted that the baby later died when no helper came forward.

People gathered in groups close to the scene of incident discussing the discovery. The Guardian overheard one of the groups saying a newborn was also dropped at the same dustbin site last year. They lamented that dumping of newborn babies at refuse sites was becoming a norm in the area and frowned at the development.

As at the time this story was filed, the body of the baby was still at the dustbin. When contacted, the Rivers State Police Public Relations Officer, Nnamdi Omoni, said the command was yet to be briefed about the development.

Meanwhile, a consultant pediatrician at the state's apex hospital, the Braithwaite Memorial Specialist Hospital, Dr. Joseph Appolous, said extreme cold could lead to death of newborn babies and failure of babies to cry immediately after birth among others could kill.

He said no child deserves to be thrown away, adding that there are millions of people looking for children to adopt. He cautioned young ladies and women to desist from the act of dumping their babies, stating that if one does not need babies, she can take them to the motherless home for others to adopt.

