

VIO officers allegedly kill Ebonyi elders' council secretary

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7 hours ago



[FILES] Vehicle Inspection Officers

An elderly man yesterday died in Ebonyi State after a row with Vehicle Inspection Officials (VIO).

Chief Geoffrey Mgbada, secretary of the Ebonyi State Elders Council, was said to be driving with his wife when he was intercepted by the VIO personnel along Presco-Ezza Road in Abakaliki.

A witness said an argument ensued after the stop, which led to one of the VIO officers pushing the man. He died after falling and hitting his head on the road. He was rushed to the Alex Ekwueme Federal University Teaching Hospital, Abakaliki, where he was confirmed dead.

Confirming the incident, the Ebonyi State police command spokesperson, ASP Odah Love, said the police have launched a full-scale investigation on the matter pleading with the public not to take laws into their hands. She added that the body of the deceased has been deposited at the mortuary at the Alex Ekwueme Federal University Teaching Hospital, Abakaliki

Governor David Umahi reacting to the incident called for the prosecution of the VIO officials. He said two members of the team were immediately arrested by the anti-kidnapping unit of the police.



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Umahi, in a statement by his Chief Press Secretary, Emmanuel Uzor, described the death of Mgbada as “callous” and ordered full investigation. Part of the statement read: “The governor, on hearing about the death of Chief Mgbada, expressed great sadness and ordered the Commissioner of Police to arrest and prosecute the suspects who paraded themselves as VIO Officers.

“Let it be known that the governor in a town-hall meeting with Ebonyians, proscribed all taskforce agents working under any guise using the state government as cover.

“It highlighted that in the proscription order, the governor also dissolved all revenue and tax agents in the state at all levels. This he did, with a promise to summon another town hall meeting where a new tax and other revenue will be deliberated and agreed upon. It stated that the governor was yet to convene this meeting ‘before this ugly incident’.

“The governor is saddened by this careless death and wishes to dissociate the state government from the illegal activities of the VIO and other task force agents in the state and directs for immediate arrest and prosecution of such illegal tax or revenue agents.”

Umahi further commiserated with the family of the deceased and vowed to ensure that justice is done.

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