

Martins death: NFF committee recommends suspension of football activities in Nasarawa State

By **Christian Okpara**

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The ad hoc committee set up by the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) to unravel the circumstances that led to the death of Nasarawa United's player, Chineme Martins during a league game has asked the federation to suspend all football activities in Nasarawa State pending when the government provides necessary medical facilities in stadia in the state. The committee also recommended that the federation compel all the clubs in the leagues to employ qualified medical doctors and physiotherapists in their stadia before they are allowed to host matches.

Martins slumped and died during a Nigerian Professional Football League (NPFL) game in Lafia on March 8, 2020. While presenting its report to the NFF on Thursday, the ad hoc committee's chairman, Dr. Peter Singabele said among the committee's key findings were, "Nasarawa United FC, late Chineme Martins' club, had neither a medical doctor nor a physiotherapist, with a retired community health assistant heading its medical team. This led to the mismanagement of the resuscitation process.

"There was no functional ambulance at the stadium as at the time of the incident, which led to a faulty evacuation process, and the player died before he could reach the hospital, and

"Nasarawa FA and Nasarawa United FC failed in their duties to put in place emergency medical services for the match."

The committee also recommended, "all club players must undergo mandatory PCMA in line with CAF and FIFA standards that clubs must keep adequate medical records of players and officials and there must be mandatory pre-season basic medical screening."

It urged the NFF to ensure that home teams must provide safety and security precautions to be assured by the state football association.



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It added: "The Nasarawa FA should be temporarily suspended from hosting all NFF-organised matches (including domestic league matches) until some clearly stated conditions are met. The player must be immortalised. Nasarawa United FC should pay a fine of N10 million to the LMC for non-compliance with Club Licensing Regulations and violation of NPFL Framework and Rules, and should pay all financial entitlements of late Martins immediately, including arrears of salaries and insurance benefits, if any.

"The NFF should empower its Medical Committee, Technical Committee, Club Licensing Department and the LMC to exercise fully their statutory powers and functions."

The committee said it could not make any categorical statement on the actual cause of Martins' death following the refusal of his family to allow for a post-mortem examination on the corpse.

Receiving the report during virtual presentation yesterday, NFF President, Amaju Melvin Pinnick promised that the federation would study the committee's recommendations with a view to implementing all.



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“I want to give kudos to the chairman and members of this committee for the thorough job they have done” Pinnick said. “I am not surprised because we brought together perhaps the best team possible in the land for such an assignment.

“Your job was made more arduous given that it was at a time of COVID-19 pandemic outbreak, and at a time, it was only your committee that was doing any work in football. Yet, you never wavered in painstakingly attending to every detail of the assignment.

“If, at the end of the day, we have to scale down to playing league matches in only a few stadia that can provide functional ambulances and qualified medical personnel with capable referral hospitals, so be it.”

