

Foundation condemns killing of teenage with Down Syndrome, demands justice

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The Down Syndrome Foundation Nigeria has condemned the brutal murder of 16-year-old Ms Deborah, a girl with Down Syndrome, allegedly by her own father in Calabar, Cross River State.

In a statement signed by the its National Administrator, Mrs Denis Nike, and Legal Resource Personnel, Mrs Ijeoma Fynecountry, the foundation expressed outrage over what it described as a “heinous crime” and decried the rising violence, abuse, and discrimination against individuals with Down Syndrome and other intellectual disabilities.

It stated that such attacks were often driven by ignorance and harmful cultural beliefs, leading to devastating consequences.

The incident reportedly took place on February 15, 2025, at No. 7 Jacob Street, off Eyo Edem, in Calabar South Local Council where the victim’s father had justified his actions by falsely labelling his daughter as a “witch” and a “snake.”

Calling for urgent intervention, the Foundation urged the Nigerian government at all levels to take decisive action against the systemic abuse of persons with disabilities.

It emphasised the need for strict enforcement of existing laws and policies, stressing that perpetrators must be swiftly brought to justice.

As an organisation with branches in Lagos, Ibadan, and Abuja, the Foundation reaffirmed its commitment to supporting individuals with Down Syndrome and intellectual disabilities across Nigeria.

It noted that the mistreatment of persons with disabilities reflected a societal failure to uphold their rights and dignity.

The statement further emphasised that persons with Down Syndrome are full-fledged citizens who deserve the same rights and protections as everyone else.

The foundation called for a nationwide shift in attitudes to eradicate stigma, promote inclusivity, and ensure accountability for those who harm individuals with disabilities.

Demanding justice for Ms Deborah, the Down Syndrome Foundation Nigeria urged the authorities, civil society groups, and the public to work together in safeguarding the rights and dignity of persons

with disabilities in the country.