

Mother Fingers Proprietor Over Missing Child

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HEAD, CRIME DESK

The disappearance of a two-year-old girl from the premises of a Lagos private school has become a thorny issue between the mother and the school's proprietress.

The disappearance of Adeola Akinware on Friday, June 2, this year from St. Saviour Nursery

• *It's Blackmail, She Says*

and Primary School, Ijegan, a suburb of Lagos, has also remained an almost impossible puzzle for operatives at the State Criminal Investigation Department (SCID), Pantti Street, Lagos to solve.

The girl's mother, Josephine Akinware, who is also a

teacher in the secondary arm of the school, alleged that three of her colleagues connived with the school proprietress, Beatrice Buwa, to steal her child for inexplicable reasons.

Mrs Akinware, who has been a staff of the school for

12 years, said she was convinced that her daughter might have been given away for rituals, as all efforts to know her whereabouts had proved abortive since her disappearance over a month ago.

In a petition to Lagos State Commissioner of Police, Commissioner for Education and the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), State CID, the

mother of two claimed she left the missing girl and her sister, Doyin Akinware (4), in the custody of two supervisors of the school but was shocked beyond words when the girl was declared missing around 4.30 p.m. when she went to the school to pick them up.

She accused the school proprietor of engaging in fetish

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and occult practices.

Mrs Akinware claimed that her fears that her daughter might have been kidnapped for rituals stemmed from past experiences.

According to her, cases of deaths and missing pupils were an annual occurrence in the school.

But in an interview with *Saturday Independent*, the proprietress, Mrs Beatrice Buwa, said she sympathised with Mrs Akinware over the missing girl.

She revealed that the

school's management was working assiduously to ensure the missing girl was found.

She, however, described the girl's mother's accusation as a wicked propaganda.

It was a plot to malign her, she insisted.

"I am a mother and a Baptist. I clearly understand her (Akinware's) feelings and sentiments, because we are talking about a human life and her baby girl. The school is very concerned about the matter and we have not stopped searching for the girl. But it amounts to

wickedness and sheer blackmail for her to accuse me of being responsible for the loss of her baby, when she knew quite well that I am not involved in the day-to-day running of the school.

"Besides, she met her husband in this school and she bore the two children right in my hands. How could I have stolen Adeola, who is like my own baby?

"It is blackmail and I pray that very soon the truth will manifest," she said.

On the allegations of fetishism, recurring deaths and missing pupils in the school, the proprietress challenged her accuser to produce evidence to support her claims.