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## Ovoko Killing: Court Orders IG To Produce Police Officer

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Reporter, Enugu

**AN ENUGU** High Court sitting in Enugu-Ezike, Igbo-Eze North Local Government Area has ordered the Inspector General of Police, Ogbonna Onovo, to produce a police officer, Inspector Victor Ugwu, who is standing trial before the court for killing a student, Chukwuebuka Omeje, last June.

The late Omeje who was a senior secondary school II student of Boys' Secondary School, Ovoko in Igbo-Eze South council, was gunned down by a team of Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) of the state police command, allegedly mistaking him for a kidnapper.

But the deceased's colleague, Denis Mamah, also a student of the school, who survived the attack had said after the incident that the plain-clothed policemen using an unmarked vehicle had opened fire on the deceased at a bus stop when both students were returning from a religious activity of the Block Rosary Crusade in the area.

When the trial commenced Monday, young men and women who are members of the deceased's Block Rosary Crusade of the Catholic Church besieged the court wearing white vests on which the photo of the deceased is crested.

His parents, Dominic and Christiana Omeje, were in court too.

Counsel to the family of the deceased, Ike Obeta and the state counsel, P.C. Ozokolo, expressed dissatisfaction that the suspect said to have been detained at the force headquarters, Abuja was not brought to court.

Hence, Justice Raymond Ozoemena, who is hearing the matter, ordered the Inspector-General of Police "to produce the suspect in court on June 28 from wherever he is now and this order is on the IG."

Ozoemena further ordered that the attention of the principal officer to the Inspector General of Police and that of the Enugu State Police Commissioner, Mohamed Zarewa, be drawn to the order.

Deceased counsel (Obeta)

leading P.O. Onyemelukwe had informed the court that it appeared to them that the police in Enugu have been employing certain tactics aimed at shielding the suspect from justice.

They complained to the court that it appeared a deliberate plot for the relevant police authorities to fail to return the suspect to Enugu or Nsukka to make him available for the trial.

State counsel (Ozokolo) told the court that it was learnt that the IG's office has finished its investigation and that the suspect is being locked in a police cell at the force headquarters.

Obeta in his submission said he had it on good authority that the police in Abuja, who handled the investigation following a

petition to Onovo are surprised that the suspect has not been taken back to Enugu by the state police authorities and that he may be released any moment if nothing is done now.

It was learnt that following the petition by the family of the slain student, Onovo had ordered a special investigation unit of his office to handle the matter upon which the detectives moved into Enugu took the suspect to Abuja.

The operatives have since concluded their findings and made the report available to the police in Enugu for further action but they appear to be delaying the trial, a development which created charged atmosphere in court.

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