

Tragedy as SS1 student drowns in Ebonyi lake

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A pall of grief descended on Abakaliki, capital of Ebonyi State, after a Senior Secondary (SS) 1 student of Abakaliki High School, Chinonso Nwokporo drowned in an artificial lake located at the International Market, Abakaliki.

The body of Nwokporo, a native of Oriuzor in Ezza North local Government Area of the state, was found floating in the lake on Thursday with blood gushing out of his mouth, ears and nose when it was recovered.

An eyewitness, Master Okechukwu Eze, said he and the deceased had gone to the pond to swim when he got drowned.

“We went to the pond to swim and nobody among us knows how to swim. So we were just at the shallow part of the pond where people normally stay and fetch water for their various uses. We stayed there and fetch water and came out and bathed.

“As were going back to our houses that evening, my friend Chinonso went back and I thought he went to bring a cloth he forgot. Before I could notice what was happening, he had entered the pond and started shouting for help and I went to rescue him.

“When I jumped into the pond, I started drowning also but I was able to come out and I didn’t know when and how I came out because I was shouting Jesus! Jesus! Jesus! I

shouted on top of my voice for rescue of my friend but no one came around until one of the security men stationed to take care of the market came to fetch water from the pond.

“The security man told me that he doesn’t know how to swim; hence, he cannot do anything about my friend’s case. I then ran to the house of my friend and informed his mother”, he added.

The father of the victim, Mr. Edwin Nwokporo expressed surprise at the incident as his late son was not known with swimming.

A resident, who did not want his name in print, said the lake was created by contractors handling the market as a source of water for their construction work.

They however lamented that the lake had killed many of their sons over the years and called for its closure.

“This is the third person to die in the lake. The lake has some evil spirit residing there and every year one person must die in that lake. There was a year that a big cow drowned in the lake,” said one of the residents.

Speaking to reporters at the scene, Chairman of the state’s Emergency Management Agency, Evangelist Ephraim Ononye urged government to close down the pond to stop the continuous drowning of children.