

'German crushed my daughter to death on Sallah'



•Ikhman

Little Ikhman Adeleke was to celebrate her sixth year birthday on October 26, but that is not to be again after a Julius Berger truck being driven by a German crushed her to death in Abuja on Sallah day, writes JIDE BABALOLA

CAN any Nigerian do this in Germany and escape justice?" was all that Hussein Adeleke, an uncle to the deceased girl kept muttering. Like his twin-brother, Hassan and the other members of the family, a day that started so wonderfully turned out to be the worst Sallah day in their collective experience. It was a sad irony; a very painful one. The little girl and her siblings were being taken to the recreation

park on Sallah day on Thursday when a German, driving a Mercedes Benz truck with Julius Berger's colours crushed her and put an end to her tender life. According to her father, Mr. Hassan Adeleke (36), the little girl was to celebrate her sixth birthday on October 26, this year. But a German driving a truck that belongs to Julius Berger has permanently put an end to such a dream. Until her untimely death, Ikhman Adeleke, a Primary Two pupil at New Dimension Nursery and Primary School in Kubwa, Abuja had dreams of growing up to become a doctor. But minutes after being hit by a car near her father's residence in Kado Estate, doctors at the National Hospital could not rescue the little girl and her tender dreams.

"Almost everybody is aware that Julius Berger

vehicles have been committing all sorts of things in Abuja, but they seem to be above the law. You cannot imagine even an adult being killed the way my daughter was killed. We are in too much pain; I do not want to talk about this," a forlorn-looking Mr. Hassan Adeleke told *Sunday Punch*. Family members were trying to console him throughout Saturday. His twin brother, Hussein Adeleke, who was just arriving from Oshogbo with the aim of lightening his brother's unexpected psychological burden, insisted that justice must be done. "Can any Nigerian ever use a car to crush a girl to death in Germany without serious consequences?" he queried.

In grieving tones, Fatima Ahmadu, the housemaid, who was taking the children to the nearby recreation park, said in halting English that the ghastly impact of the car on the little girl's body was startling. "The white man and a woman were speeding with the vehicle. He hit Ikhman and her body rolled in the air, like paper, before it hit (the) ground," she explained. It was around five o'clock on Thursday evening.

It turned out that the German, whose name is yet to be released by the police at the Life Camp Police Station, came accompanied

by some Nigerian employees of Julius Berger, to greet the deceased girl's family. Just before he was driven away in a Golf car with Julius Berger's blue and white colours and Abuja registration number BU 887 ABC, our correspondent made efforts to ask him a few questions, but a bulky Nigerian aide resisted the attempt, insisting that his German boss cannot talk

because he is in a bad state. "He cannot talk to you now. I cannot give you his name. He is bothered about what happened," the man said.

Adeleke was not impressed by the sympathy visit. According to him, he had been given the impression at the Life Camp Police Station that the German would be detained overnight to provide the police with comprehensive details of the accident, but the man only had another chance to demonstrate indifference.

"I was told to go home, but someone advised us to wait outside the police station to see what would happen. About 40 minutes after I had come out, I saw the German coming out too. He was just puffing at his cigarette with the air of someone who had no care in this world," Adeleke explained.

Ahmadu later took *Sunday Punch* through the details of how the family's Sallah day disaster unfolded. She was to take the children to a nearby recreation park. Eight-month-old Annah was on her back and Ikhman and Yusuf, her four-year-old cousin, were being led by hand. She got the two older children to cross the road first and she was to follow with the toddler.

Suddenly, the speeding truck appeared, reached where the two children were, and in an instant, the girl was tumbling in the air after taking the full impact of the

vehicle's momentum. At that point, they were only about two hundred metres away from the recreation park, where the children wanted to feel a climax of the Sallah day fun.

The German allegedly warned off a male passer-by, who wanted to pick up the dying little girl. Shortly afterwards, he and the lady in his truck allowed the Good Samaritan to enter the vehicle and they drove to Julius Berger's clinic with the girl. According to Fatima, "Blood was all over Ikhman's head. Blood was flowing from her nose and her eyes." After a brief check at the Julius Berger clinic, an ambulance with a nurse and the driver sped off with Ikhman's body towards the National Hospital, where her death was confirmed. It was Ikhman's last Sallah day on earth. She was buried by wailing aunts and uncles that same evening.

The policemen on duty at the Life Camp Police Station refused to disclose the name of the German and the content of statement he gave. "The DPO is not around, the DCO is not on duty and the DTO is not in. You have to come back on Monday," they said. They were unwilling to explain the curious situation whereby the station's DPO, the Divisional Crime Officer and the Divisional Traffic Officer were all unavailable.

However, the Police Public Relations Officer at the FCT Police Command, DSP Uzoma Nwaoha, promised to personally visit the police station and get all relevant details for *Sunday Punch* before Monday.

"Justice is all that we ask for. No Nigerian can do this in that (German) man's country and expect this kind of matter to die away like that," Hussein Adeleke, an uncle to the dead girl, stated.

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