

# Nine months after, boy who drank acid in Ogun school dies

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*Darasimi: After and before the incident*

Kunle Falayi

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A nine-year-old Darasimi Ogunwunmi, a Kindergarten One pupil, who drank caustic soda left carelessly in his classroom by teachers of his private school, Fahsal Children's School, Ilupeju Estate, Idiroko, Lagos State in November 2015, has died.

429  
After nine months of agony, being unable to swallow either liquid or solid food and six different surgeries at Lagos University Teaching Hospital, Darasimi succumbed to his injuries few days after his last surgical operation on Monday, September 12.

The last surgery was another attempt to open up the boy's stomach and throat which had become damaged by the chemical, which he drank when he was thirsty in school.

Darasimi, the last days of his short life were spent in a condition his mother, Toyin, described as a g hell.

in told our correspondent, "My son would have died long ago if not because of the money that kind Nigerians raised for his treatment. The money financed his surgeries and rehabilitation since that time.

"If I knew he had no chance of survival, I would have prayed that God should give him rest long ago because my son suffered for every day he lived after that incident. Every day, I saw him lying in the hospital bed or sitting at home struggling to drink ordinary water with pain, I cried bitterly."

*Saturday PUNCH* had exclusively reported in January and February how the proprietor of Fahsal, Mrs. Fausat Abubakar, allegedly introduced soap making business on the school premises.

But rather than remove the production far from the reach of her pupils, the boy's parents alleged that the soap was being produced right beside the classrooms.

On November 19, 2015, the worse happened when Darasimi became thirsty and his teachers turned a deaf ear to his incessant cry for water.

Part of the caustic soda already mixed and allegedly left around was what Darasimi drank from.

His teachers only realised what had happened when the boy was found outside his classroom crying and bleeding from the mouth, it was learnt.

The teachers applied palm oil to the boy's mouth but rushed him to the hospital when they realised his case was critical.

#### **430 in government promised us justice, did nothing – Boy's parents**

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r *Saturday PUNCH*'s story, the Ogun State Commissioner for Education, Mrs. Modupe Mujota, said she had constituted a team to investigate the case.

the family explained that nothing had been done about bringing the proprietor of their son's school to ce.

correspondent contacted the commissioner on Thursday to ask if anything was ever done about the boy's case and what the outcome of the state's investigation was.

"There was a full investigation. But because there was no hard evidence, it became difficult to take the case up legally. We combed the premises of the school and nothing was found, probably because time had elapsed and the school might have cleaned up," Mujota said.

When asked what step the ministry took after the completion of the investigation, she said an action was taken against the proprietor.

But the commissioner said she could not disclose details of what that action was when asked for details.

She said, "There are larger factors to be considered when you want to close down a school like the population the school is serving."

When our correspondent finally told Mrs. Mujota that the boy was dead, she expressed surprise and said "we were not informed."

She also said after our initial reports, the state government team had visited the family twice.

"If they say we did not visit, between when and when are they talking about? We have pictures as evidence of our team's visit to the child and his mother. There were allegations from the school proprietor that the boy's parents were trying to extort her. We went to verify the claim."

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Contact: [editor@punchng.com](mailto:editor@punchng.com)