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Lagos investigates Portuguese wife's death after childbirth in hospital

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The Lagos State Government has begun investigation into the death of a 24-year-old make-up artist, Mrs. Chiamaka de Freitas, at the Medical Art Centre, Onigbongbo, Lagos State.

The Director of the Lagos State Office of the Public Defender, Mrs. Salami Olubukola, said the state Attorney General and Commissioner for Justice, Mr. Adeniji Kazeem, had directed that the allegation of the victim's husband, Arlindo de Freitas, that the hospital had a hand in the death of his wife, be duly investigated.

Arlindo, a Portuguese, had lamented that the hospital forced his late wife to undergo a caesarean section.

He added that after being delivered of a baby boy on March 24, 2017, the Imo State indigene started bleeding due to some complications from the C-section.

He said the victim died on Sunday, March 26, after bleeding for about 15 hours.

He said, "I took her to the hospital on Thursday evening and we did the necessary scans. They said she would have to go through a surgery the following day by 8am.

"When we got there the following day, I signed the necessary papers and she was taken into the theatre. The baby was born by 8.37am and everybody was happy.

"Around 7pm, my wife started bleeding. I noticed that the blood was coming out from different parts of her body, including her private parts. I called the doctors' attention to it and asked if the bleeding was normal. They said I should not worry that everything was fine.

"She bled till the following day. They called me and said they wanted to do a blood test. After two hours, they said her blood pressure was low. They took my wife again into the theatre to see what was wrong. They said they didn't see anything.

"They said they needed to do blood transfusion. She continued to bleed until she died on Sunday morning."

Arlindo, who said his late wife conceived through *in vitro fertilisation* at the hospital, blamed some of the facility workers whom he said handled the delivery carelessly.

“When she was bleeding, they were injecting her with one pain killer after the other. And at a point, she stopped reacting to it. She bled from 7pm on Friday to 12pm on Saturday, until she lost all her blood. When they were transfusing blood into her, it was passing out from her body until she died.

“They had been talking about the C-section since she was 20 weeks pregnant. They said when the pregnancy got to week 37, they would do the operation. Although she was normal, they insisted on a C-section because it is big money in Nigeria. They charged N1.1m for the C-section. With other costs, including accommodation, we were charged N1.4m,” he added.

He said his lawyer would petition the National Assembly over the matter, saying he would follow the case to the end.

However, the hospital, in a statement, said it had no hand in the death of the victim.

The hospital noted that it was saddened by the development because in its four years of existence, Chiamaka’s death was the first mortality recorded at the hospital.

The statement read in part, “As a maternity unit with zero tolerance for maternal morbidity, mortality and prenatal mortality, we ensure that all our patients’ care is consultant-led. Two consultants are always in attendance for surgeries, including a consultant anaesthetist, a paediatrician and world-class preoperative nurses, for any surgery.

“Chiamaka was so precious to us that her history dates back to when she was trying to conceive three years ago and successfully underwent IVF at Medical Art Centre. She conceived and continued her antenatal care with us.

“When Chiamaka didn’t show up for her regular antenatal classes at 37 weeks in the hospital, the consultants were concerned. They contacted her at week 39. At this time, she told them that she was out of town and would attend when she gets back.

“When she presented herself at 41 weeks, the doctors had to carry out another assessment. After further evaluations, it was discovered that there was a very low volume of amniotic fluid left for the baby’s survival.

“It was at this point they informed her husband that the baby would have to be delivered by a caesarean section. But he was hell bent on his wife having a normal vaginal delivery.

“He insisted on his wife having induction of labour despite these facts. Mr. De Freitas was counselled and persuaded to see reasons why a C-section was a necessity instead of a vaginal delivery which would have been very risky, if not impossible.

“He finally yielded and allowed the medicare surgeons operate on her after signing a written consent, which explicitly stated that other additional procedures may be necessary and he was present at the surgery.”

The statement added that during the operation, it was discovered that the umbilical cord was tied around the baby's neck twice and after much effort, the woman was delivered of the baby.



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being left alone with the wife.

The management said the victim suddenly became pale and after some tests, it was discovered that her blood level was low.

The hospital said while it was making attempts to manage the problem, including doing blood transfusion and taking late Chiamata for a second surgery, the victim's husband was more concerned about the scars that would form on his wife. The victim was reported to have passed on eight hours after the second surgery.

The statement said an autopsy conducted on the corpse in a government hospital showed that the victim died as a result of ‘concealed *haematoma* behind the bladder’.

“We have a team of experts, who have successfully delivered sets of quintuplet, quadruplet, triplet, twin and singletons, without any mishap,” the statement added.

The Director of OPD, Olubukola, said the agency had already contacted Arlindo, adding that investigations were ongoing into the matter.

“We are interested in the case and we have got in touch with the complainant,” she said.