

# Imo footballer killed, buried in shallow grave

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Chidubem Ezeagu

## *Chidiebube Okeoma, Owerri*

The remains of a 20-year-old local footballer, Chidubem Ezeagu, have been found in a shallow grave in a bush.

The body was discovered one week after he was declared missing by his family.

The tragedy, which happened at Umuelele Irete, in the Owerri West Local Government Area of Imo State, devastated residents and the deceased's family members.

The victim's elder brother, Timothy, told *PUNCH Metro* that Chidubem left home around 8.30pm last week Sunday.

According to him, the family declared him missing on Tuesday when attempts to find him failed.

He said, "Chidubem left the house last week Sunday and never returned. We called his telephone number all through Monday, but he did not pick it. On Tuesday, his telephone number became unreachable and that was when we sensed danger.

"We reported a case of missing person at the Ogbaku Police Station. We equally reported it to the youth leader of the village. A search was conducted throughout the village."

Timothy said after days of intense search, the family got information that some non-indigenes buried a man, who was butchered by unknown persons, in a shallow grave in the community.

"It was in the cause of the search that one man told us that some Hausa buried a corpse in a shallow grave.

"He said a man had called the Hausa people to identify a corpse on the ground. When they couldn't identify the body, they buried it in a shallow grave to avert breakout of an epidemic," he added.

The brother said when the corpse was exhumed, it turned out to be Chidubem.

Timothy, who called on the police to unravel the circumstances surrounding the killing of his brother, lamented that the murder adversely affected his family.

The state Commissioner of Police, Chris Ezike, said he had directed the State Criminal Investigation and Intelligence Department to take over the case.

The CP, who said the killing appeared cult-related, said the command was committed to providing adequate security.

Ezike said, "I can confirm that the matter was reported to Ogbaku Police Station as a case of missing person until on Saturday when his remains were found buried in a shallow grave. The SCIID has been

directed to take over investigation to unravel the circumstances surrounding the death, which appear cult-related.”

Our correspondent gathered that the deceased was a celebrated footballer who recently captained his club to win two major trophies in the state.

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