

Rats ate deceased baby's ear at Anambra hospital–Police

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Inspector-General of Police, Mohammed Adamu

Tony Okafor, Awka

A police report has cleared the mystery surrounding a baby's missing ear at the Victory Children's Hospital, Onitsha, Anambra State.

The report, which was sighted by our correspondent on Sunday, exonerated the hospital and its workers from blame on the incident.

The parents of the baby girl had in 2015, when the incident happened, accused the hospital management and staff of chopping off their child's ear for ritual purposes.

This resulted in a series of arrests of members of staff of the hospital.

But the report by the office of the Inspector-General of Police stated that rats actually ate the baby's ear at the hospital.

The report read in part, “This deals with a case of an alleged mutilation of a newborn baby girl’s ear reported to the Inspector-General of Police by Mr Solomon Igwe against Dr. Oliver Umeh, the owner, and staff of the Victory Children’s Hospital, Onitsha.

“On July 30, 2015, around 7.30am, Solomon Igwe, upon unwrapping the corpse, discovered that the right ear of the baby had been severed from the body.

“He reported to the Central Police Station, Onitsha, where he accused Dr Oliver Umeh as being responsible for the missing ear.

“While the investigation was ongoing, Dr Oliver Nnamdi felt dissatisfied with the police arrest and detention , and from one level of investigation to another as he was neither at the hospital during the admission/treatment and the death of the said baby hence, he petitioned the Inspector-General of Police.

“The said petition was subsequently forwarded to the Commissioner of Police, Homicide Section, for harmonisation and consolidation.

“While investigation was ongoing, the parents made a demand for the sum of N10m for Dr Oliver Umeh to be vindicated, but he sensed a foul play and an attempt to extort and blackmail him using the then investigating team.

“Consequently, he wrote a counter petition to the Deputy Inspector-General of Police, urging the transfer of the case to Abuja for an unbiased investigation.

“In the course of the investigation, statements of parties to the case were recorded and the scene of crime was visited. Detectives also viewed the corpse of the deceased baby.

“An autopsy was conducted on the remains of the deceased baby, but the parents contested the outcome.

“This occasioned the parents of the deceased baby to arrange for another pathologist, who conducted a second autopsy.

“In the course of investigation, it was established that Mr Solomon Igwe and his wife, Bridget, brought their five-day-old baby girl to the Victory Children’s Hospital, Onitsha, as a referral case from St. Mary’s Hospital, Okpoko Onitsha.

“It was also revealed that 45 minutes after their arrival, the baby died in the presence of the parents while on admission, but the parents could not collect the corpse on that fateful day, but on arrival for the collection of the corpse the following day for burial, it was discovered that the deceased’s right ear had been severed; they alerted Dr Amadi Ifeanyi of the development and subsequently reported to the police.”

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The report added that police investigation revealed that the parents capitalised on the discovered severed ear and became suspicious of the cause of death.

It further stated that both the first and second post-mortem examinations conducted on the insistence of the father of the deceased baby revealed that the ear was apparently removed by rodents, hence the serrated edges of the defect left behind. Histology also shows that the defect arose after death.

“Consequently, this evidently resolved the contention as to the cause of death and the severed ear.

“There is nothing of evidential value linking Dr Oliver Umeh to the alleged crime in the course of investigation as no enough evidence abound on the allegation linking Dr. Oliver Umeh to any crime.”

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