

COVID-19: Enugu woman who tested negative dies, daughter protests

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Enugu State Governor, Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi

Raphael Ede, Enugu

A septuagenarian who tested negative after she was quarantined in Enugu for coronavirus is dead.

Police on Wednesday cordoned off the Isolation Centre, Colliery Hospital, where the 70-year-old said to have returned to Nigeria after a five-month trip to Britain was isolated.

The daughter of the deceased, Uche Ngwu, had written a letter to Governor Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi, claiming her mother was not only isolated in the dilapidated part of the hospital but the officials acted unprofessionally in their handling of the matter.

According to her, the situation led to the death of her mother a day after the coronavirus test results were released.

She wrote, “My mother died due to the negligence and unpreparedness of the state in putting adequate facilities including staff training in place. The new strand of the coronavirus was detected back in December 2019 and it is absolutely disappointing that there is no appropriate isolation centre in Enugu State.

“After the death of my mother, finding a workable stretcher to move her body was impossible! You would expect any hospital to provide basic facilities such as a stretcher – my mother’s body was carried into the ambulance on a wretched tool.”

The announcement of the death of the woman in the letter went viral on social media sparked outrage.

Our correspondent, who visited the hospital, saw riot police stationed at the gate to hospital.

Some of the officers told our correspondent that they were on their way to Enugu-Makurdi Road for patrol duties when they received a signal detailing them to move to the hospital.

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One of the officers, who prevented our correspondent from entering the hospital premises to ascertain the true state of the centre, said the state government had directed that they should not allow anybody including the workers to enter the premises until they were directed to do so.

The hospital has a mortuary and maternity.

A middle-aged man, who gave his name as Simon Odo, told our correspondent that he brought the body of his dead brother to the hospital on Tuesday night but lamented that he was not allowed into the facility.

He said, “The body of my brother is lying there and nobody is attending to it and I am not allowed to take the corpse to another hospital.”

A medical doctor working with the Enugu State University Teaching Hospital, Parklane, claimed the state government hurriedly painted the hospital and provided needed facilities after public outrage over the letter after it went out viral.