

Ikpeazu orders probe as policeman Abia graduate orphan to death

Oluwatosin Omojuyigbe and Sunday Nwakanma

THE Abia State Police Command has arrested a policeman, Inspector Ukeme Etuk, for allegedly killing a graduate of the Abia State Polytechnic, Chinyere Ugochukwu, over an alleged N50 bribe.

Ugochukwu was said to be travelling on a motorcycle on Friday when his rider was accosted by policemen at a checkpoint in front of the Metrological Complex on Obikabia-Umukalika Road in the Obingwa Local



• Ugochukwu



• Abia CP, Agbede

PUNCH Metro learnt that the policemen, led by

one Yahaya, attached to the Aba area command, requested a bribe from the motorcyclist, who declined the request, which led to an argument.

Our correspondents gathered that Etuk shot Ugochukwu when he attempted to intervene in the matter.

According to a blog that posted about the incident, siggy.ng, the policemen fled the scene after the incident.

An eyewitness, Christopher Nduagu, said Etuk warned the deceased not to move close to him and shot him when he did.

He said, "He was a passenger on a motorcycle going to Obikabia Junction but one of the policemen at Umukalika police checkpoint stopped them to demand their usual N50, but the motorcyclist told him that he did not have the money.

"They had a heated argument, leading to intervention by the passenger. But the police officer, who warned Chinyere (Ugochukwu) not to come close to him, fired him and when he was rushed to a private hospital nearby, he was pronounced dead."

Another eyewitness who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the motorcyclist was also shot in his knee.

The state Police Public Relations Officer, Geoffrey Obonna, who confirmed the incident, said the police inspector was attached to the Ohuru Isimiri Police Station.

He said, "On the 16th of November, there was an incident of accidental discharge around 10.50am along Umukalika Road in Obingwa.

"A police patrol team ran into a group of Okada (motorcycle) riders blocking the road and in the process of dispersing them, there was a

misunderstanding, during which one Inspector Ukeme Etuk released a shot that hit Ugochukwu in the buttocks."

According to him, the victim was rushed to a hospital for medical attention, but he died on November 20.

The PPRO said the cop had been arrested and detained for trial, adding that appropriate measures would be taken against him.

Meanwhile, following public outcry, the state Governor, Okezie Ikpeazu, has directed the immediate investigation of the incident.

The governor, in a release by his Chief of Staff, Prof. A.C.B. Agbazuer, reminded residents that his government had in the past ensured the arrest of trigger-happy policemen and made them face justice.

He urged everyone to maintain the peace and go about their normal duties "as the government will strictly not tolerate lawlessness under any guise".

However, Abians called on the Inspector-General of Police, Usman Baba, and the Abia State Commissioner of Police, Mrs Janeth Agbede, to swing into action and bring the perpetrators to book.

The victim, who was said to be an orphan, was reportedly sponsored to school by his extended family.

Air Force woman dies after snakebite in NAF base toilet

Solomon Odeniyi, Abuja

A Nigerian Air Force woman, Lance Corporal Bercy Ogah, has died after she was reportedly bitten by a snake.

Ogah, who was attached to the Defence Intelligence Agency, was allegedly bitten by the snake while using a restroom in her flat at the NAF Base on Bill Clinton Drive in Abuja.

She was said to have driven her children and a relation staying with her to her neighbour's house before visiting the Nigerian Air Force hospital, where she gave up the ghost.

PUNCH Metro learnt that the incident happened in the early hours of Friday.

A source told our correspondent that reptiles and other wild animals were common in the base.

The source said, "You will find all kinds of wild animals in the base. People who stay there see snakes a lot.

"The houses in the base were fumigated recently but hers was left behind because she was not around. The snake must have hidden in her toilet.

"After the snake bite, she took her child and a relative staying with her to her neighbour before she



• Ogah

drove to the NAF hospital for treatment.

"When she got to the hospital, it took a little while before the anti-venom vaccine

was administered to her. Apart from the vaccine not being readily available, I learnt that the person in charge of the drugs was not on duty.

"I don't know the name of the snake, but they said it was very poisonous. Also, the part of the body the snake bite made her not survive, among others issues."

Efforts to get the reactions of the spokesperson for the Nigerian Air Force, Edward Gabkwet, were not successful, as calls put to his telephone line did not connect.

He had also yet to respond to a text message sent to him as of the time of filing this report.