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Lagos delivery man remanded over stolen bike dies in prison

Toni Ufoh  26 May 2022

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Chidera

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A 19-year-old delivery man with a company, Errand360NG, Chidera (Ezekiel) Uzoma, has died in the Ikoyi Custodial Centre where he was remanded over the loss of a bike belonging to his employers.

PUNCH Metro gathered that after Chidera reported the loss to the company, he was arrested and charged to court.

A Twitter user, Oluchi @General_Oluchi, in a series of tweets on Monday, said the victim had been in remand since March 2022, adding that his elder brother, Samuel, had been calling for his release.

She tweeted, "Can we talk about this case? 20-year-old Chidera Uzoma started working for @errand360HQ as a delivery guy and one morning, he discovered that the work bike he parked in front of his apartment was missing. He informed the company and they arrested and charged him in court but promised to drop the case if he replaces the bike. Chidera replaced the bike, but @errand360HQ refused to drop the case. In March, he was remanded in Ikoyi prison and was found dead on April 24. Since then, his brother @justice4ezekiel has been tweeting about it."

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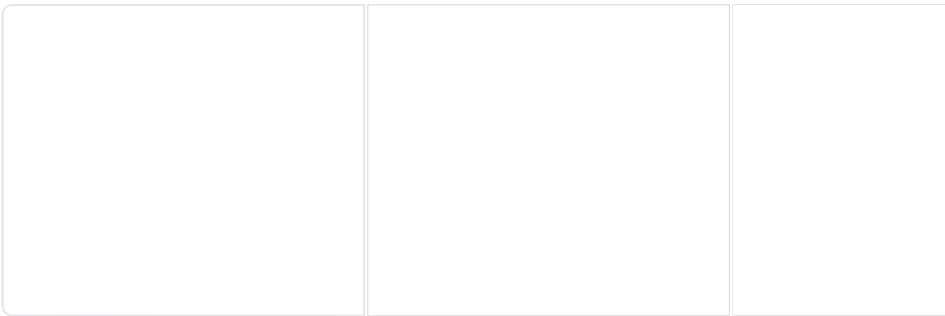


“Ikoyi Prison said Chidera was sick for a while before he died. His family needs closure because the circumstances surrounding his death are mysterious.”

The victim’s brother, Samuel, said he went to the mortuary to retrieve his body on May 23.

He tweeted, *“Yesterday, I was at the mortuary for the 2nd time. I was telling my brother, ‘bro bushman don come Lag o, come teach me how to drag bus. He couldn’t even look at me. He laid there like a log of wood. Nigerians help me ask @errand360HQ. What happened to chidera, #justiceforchidera?’*

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“He will be 20 by 12th October 2022. A dispatch company called @errand360HQ arrested him over a missing bicycle. Sue him without any of his family members knowing. He died in custody (ikoyi prison) the bicycle was even replaced, yet the complainant didn’t withdraw the case.”

The company, in a statement on Wednesday, said Chidera was treated with respect and fairness while he worked with them.

“He was also subject to the same contract terms, which included that he presented a surety before engagement. This surety was a certain Mr Kenneth, who he introduced as his relative.

“On February 14, 2022, against company policy, Mr Ezekiel (Chidera) took the company’s bicycle home and failed to return it the next day. He claimed that the bicycle had been stolen. Upon internal investigations and speaking to Ezekiel, the company did not find the story credible and so he was requested to return the missing bicycle.

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“Some days later, specifically on February 19, some persons broke into the company’s maintenance building. The security personnel at the facility on the day identified Ezekiel as one of those who broke in. While investigating, we were informed that the police visited Ezekiel’s residence where some of the company’s bicycle parts were found.

“Based on this, the police arrested him and took him into custody for investigation and arraignment.”

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“On April 4, a replacement for the missing bicycle was provided. The company went to court and attempted an early withdrawal of the case, despite the next date of hearing being June 8. However, Ezekiel’s presence was required in court but authorities could not provide him before the court.

“We value the well-being of all our riders and employees and are deeply saddened by Mr Ezekiel’s passing. The company followed due process by escalating the matter to the police for appropriate investigation and arraignment.”

The spokesperson for the Ikoyi Custodial Centre, Rotimi Oladokun, said records of the matter were not readily available.

“I am not in a position to deny or confirm this incident now, but I will go through the records and if there is any information regarding this matter, it will be made available to you.

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