

## Anambra man dies in police custody, family kicks as corpse disappears

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By Ikenna Obianeri

30th June 2022



The family of a 30-year-old man, Chinonso Omeh, who was allegedly killed in police custody, has demanded justice for him.

Chinonso, who hailed from Umuogboagu community, Enugu Ezike, in the Igbo Eze North Local Government Area of Enugu State, died at the State Criminal Investigation Department Annex, Awkuzu.

The elder brother of the deceased, Onyebuchi, who spoke on Wednesday in Onitsha, Anambra State, said the victim, who operated a car wash centre at the Ogbunike area, was arrested on February 4, 2022.

He explained that the deceased was arrested at the instance of one Austin on alleged charges of threat to life.

According to him, Chinonso was detained at the Ogidi Police Station before being transferred to Awkuzu, adding that the police at Awkuzu denied the family access to him after initially denying that he was in their custody.

“After repeated attempts to see him at the Awkuzu State CID Annex failed, we wrote a petition to the Assistant Inspector-General of Police in charge of Zone 13, Ukpou, Anambra State, through a lawyer and the Investigating Police Officer at Ogidi was summoned. He gave a graphic account of how, when and who he handed the late Chinonso over to at Awkuzu.

“When the team from Awkuzu was also summoned to Zone 13, they confessed that Chinonso was in their custody, but dead now, having slumped in their cell and later pronounced dead by a medical doctor,” he added.

Onyebuchi lamented that when the family requested to see the corpse, they were taken to a private mortuary and shown the body of a 70-year-old man in place of their late brother.

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He alleged that the police might have killed his brother for ritual purposes since they could not provide his corpse.

The victim's brother said the last time the family met the team investigating the matter at Zone 13, they were surprised to hear that the two police officers from Awkuzu — the IPO, Michael Nelson, and his team leader known as Big Sam — who were earlier detained, had been released.

While calling for justice, he insisted that the police should come clean and tell the family what happened to Chinonso.

The state Police Public Relations Officer, DSP Tochukwu Ikenga, said the complaint was before the command.

“The command has since received the complaint and the case is under investigation,” Ikenga added.

The Assistant Inspector-General of Police, Zone 13, Ukpo, Umaru Muri, said a full-scale investigation into the incident was ongoing.

Muri said a report of the investigation would be forwarded to him, adding that he had also summoned all the parties involved in the case.

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