

# Flood sweeps four-year-old boy away in Lagos

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**P**ARENTS of a four-year-old boy, Chukwuemeka Okoro, and their neighbours are currently troubled over their inability to retrieve the boy's body almost one week after he was washed away by a flood in a Lagos community.

*PUNCH Metro* gathered that the incident happened last week Tuesday when Okoro fell into a canal at Nobel Street and washed away through a nearby drainage in the Onibata community, both in the Ogba area of Lagos.

The tragedy was said to have occurred during a downpour witnessed in the area on Tuesday.

Okoro, who was said to be standing at the edge of a drainage at Nobel Street in Ogba reportedly slipped and fell inside the drainage as the flood washed him into a canal that led to the Onibata community.

Our correspondent who visited the scene on Friday saw no few than 20 volunteer members of the family and residents, combing the area in a frantic search for Okoro's body.

As of the time of filing this report, efforts to retrieve his body had yet to yield any results.

Okoro's distraught father, Ikechukwu, in an interview with *PUNCH Metro*, said he was interested in retrieving his son's body to enable the family to conduct the final rites as demanded by their tradition.

He said, "We are so sad. We have not been able to report this incident to the authority because we have been busy looking for the boy. We were more than 50 yesterday (Thursday). I don't think you can step your feet in the canal. We are yet to find his body."

"There was a lady here that promised that she was going to inform the authority about the incident, but we never heard anything about it since then. What we are now seeking is to see the body and perform our traditional rite."

"From Onibata here, the search has led us to Alagbole.



• Okoro

We also went to Akintolu. It was when we got there that the residents in the area told us that the river did not flow to the area and that it diverted somewhere else. We have even extended our search to Kara, hoping to see him, but nothing came out of it."

Meanwhile, a resident of the Onibata community told *PUNCH Metro* of the danger the canal posed to them after several efforts to get the government's attention to help the community with a proper drainage system.

The resident said, "Over time, we have called the government's attention to all these things. It has been one promise after the other. When we get to the height of the rainy season, water always entered people's houses from the canal. Although the marking has been done by way of a barrier, work is yet to commence."

"This is the rainy season; government should come and do something before it gets to a stage where water will be carrying everybody away from their apartment. Sometimes, you see pythons and other reptiles entering people's homes. We hope they can expedite action on this canal. The makeshift bridge between Onibata and Ogundimu is no longer passable."

When contacted, the spokesperson for the Lagos State Emergency Maintenance Agency, Nosa Okunbor, said the agency was not aware of the incident.

"The family should have tried 767 immediately after the incident happened. I will call the control room if there is anything they could do about it," he said.