

Lagos probes doctor's death in hospital elevator, colleagues shun work

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The Nigerian Medical Association, Lagos State chapter, has protested the death of a medical officer undergoing horsemanship, Dr. Vwaere Diaso, who reportedly died after an elevator she was in crashed at the General Hospital, Odan, Lagos Island on Tuesday.

The Lagos State Government, on Wednesday, said it had set up a panel of inquiry to look into the circumstances surrounding the incident and promised to sanction anyone found culpable.

PUNCH Metro gathered that Diaso was in the elevator on her way to get her food from a dispatch rider when the incident happened.

She was rushed to the emergency ward of the hospital where she was confirmed dead.

Following this, a protest rocked the hospital on Wednesday as her colleagues besieged the premises and grounded activities there.

The protesters carried placards with inscriptions such as, “I don’t want to die,” “Doctors’ lives matter,” “Justice for Vwaere,” “The system failed you, Diaso,” and “Here is Vwaere Diaso, she didn’t have to die for us to get it right.”

Diaso’s protesting colleagues shut the hospital’s main gate, the health service commission’s gate, and the Lagos Island Maternity Hospital’s gate.

They expressed displeasure over the death of their colleague while accusing the hospital management of negligence.

A patient, who was at the hospital for a check-up, told *PUNCH Metro* that the medical workers also refused to attend to patients as they were all grieving.

The patient who spoke on condition of anonymity, said, “I was at the hospital around 7 am. Nobody attended to us. Her colleagues began the protest around 9 am, moving around the hospital and paralysing activities. Other medical workers at the hospital also downed tools.”

Reacting, the NMA, in a statement by the state Chairman, Dr. Benjamin Olowojebutu, and Secretary, Ismail Ajibowo, directed all doctors working in the three government hospitals on Lagos Island to commence an indefinite strike.

“We direct all our doctors in the three government hospitals on the island to commence indefinite strike action until the investigations are completed and justice is served; we immediately direct our doctors in all the other government hospitals to scale down activities as a mark of respect for our dead colleague. Only emergency services should be rendered for the next five days,” the statement read in part.

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Diaso’s colleague who spoke with one of our correspondents on condition of anonymity said the deceased only had two weeks to complete her horsemanship, adding that “on many occasions, the elevator had stopped while we were inside it.”

“We report every time. The elevator is supposed to carry 630kg maximum, that’s eight people. Once you open the elevator and see two people already, you just have to wait for the next batch. It was faulty and they knew about it. That’s why we’re not going to take this. She was a very diligent house officer. She was very hardworking,” he said.

A physician, Olanrewaju Ayepola, who took to her social media page while lamenting the incident, said she was aggrieved because complaints had been made about the elevator.

“(I am) particularly aggrieved because we’ve complained for a long time about this elevator. We’ve manoeuvred, managed and prayed each time we had to use it. Empty promises will be made to fix it till it killed one of us,” she wrote via [@kristeana08](#) on X.

Another tweep, [@kiky_festus](#), said at times, people had to use their hands to close the elevator’s door as it malfunctioned.

“I’m so angry because they have been complaining about this elevator for years. Even when I go visit my friend, more than two people can’t go in it and if it stops at the sixth floor, you have to use your hands to close it yourself and step back behind a line to even out your weight. All she wanted to do was get her food from a dispatcher downstairs. It even took them an hour to get her out of the elevator.

“She was still conscious even with fractures, she was taken to the emergency and then another delay – no blood. This country failed her,” the tweet read.

However, a Wednesday statement by the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Information and Strategy, Olumide Sogunle, said the government was shocked at the news of the incident.

Sogunle said, “An inquiry by a team of officials from the Lagos State Ministry of Health, Lagos State Health Service Commission, Lagos State Safety Commission, and certified Lift and Vertical Transportation Equipment experts has commenced.

“The Lagos State Government will ensure that anyone found negligent by the report of the inquiry will face appropriate sanctions.”

Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu also commiserated with the deceased’s family.

“In light of this tragedy, I have taken immediate action to initiate a thorough investigation into the cause of the mechanical failure,” the governor said in a statement via [@jjidesanwoolu](#) on X.