

# Five children suffocate to death in Niger abandoned car

22nd April 2024

By Chika Otuchikere

Three children of the same parents and two others, ages ranging from 5 to 10 years, died in an abandoned Honda Civic car with Registration No. GO 778 ABC in Niger State following suffocation after they locked themselves inside the car for hours.

It is a common sight to find children in large numbers throwing caution to the wind and playing on the streets of Minna, the state capital.

The incident happened on Sunday in the Gurara Albishir area located on Bida Road when the frolicking children mistakenly entered the vehicle which had been abandoned for two years before the incident and locked themselves inside for over five hours.

An eyewitness in the neighbourhood who gave his name as Bala Usman said the children were playing in a large compound when they hopped into the abandoned car, which refused to open.

“They tried to open the car, but it refused to open and so they gave up trying. The car has been parked there for about two years by the owner.

“They may have mistakenly locked themselves up from around 11 am while the parents were searching for them, only to discover their dead bodies in the car around 4 pm after fruitlessly looking everywhere around the vicinity,” Usman said.

The PUNCH learned that the victims, which included four females and a male, comprised three siblings and two victims of different parents, including the owner of the car. The names and ages of four of the children were given but have been withheld as they are minors, although the identity of the 5th victim could not be ascertained.

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In his reaction, the chairman of Chanchaga Local Government Area, Aminu Ladan, confirmed the incident, describing it as unfortunate.

Aminu, whose residence is located around the neighbourhood where the incident occurred, immediately visited the scene and condoled with the bereaved families.

The Niger State Police Command PRO, Wasiu Abiodun, who also reacted to the incident, said the owner of the vehicle has been invited for questioning while the matter is under investigation.

“On 21/4/2024 at about 6.30 pm, based on information received at Kpakungu Div, five children of about 5–13 years of age were found trapped in a Honda Civic vehicle with Reg No. GO 778 ABC at Albishiri area of Minna.

“They were found to have suffocated in the vehicle, while their bodies were later removed by the various parents, as police visited the scene.

“However, the owner of the vehicle was invited for questioning, as the unfortunate incident is under investigation,” he stated.