

# Two siblings drown in Nasarawa mining site

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By Jide Ajia

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Two young siblings, Umar Muhammad, aged seven, and Ibrahim Muhammad, nine, have drowned in an abandoned excavation site operated by a Chinese firm, Kenyang Mining Company Limited.

The tragic incident occurred on Thursday at Udege Mbeki community in Nasarawa Local Government Area of the state.

The site, commonly referred to as a paddock, was said to have been filled with water due to a recent heavy rainfall.

The Chairman of Afo Youth Mobility, Dauda Kana, said the victims accompanied their cousin, who had gone to the site to wash his clothes.

Kana also blamed the Chinese firm for allegedly failing to reclaim the 50-metre setback after years of excavation in the area, adding that the company’s negligence directly contributed to the unsafe conditions that led to the children’s deaths.

“As a result, Afo Youth Mobility (officially registered as Afo Youth Mentorship Initiative) alongside nine others took the company to the Nasarawa State High Court to seek legal interpretation of the Community Development Agreement signed on September 26, 2021, between the Udege community and the mining firm.

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“Sadly, the joy that accompanied the judgment has now turned to grief. This tragic loss shows the urgent need for the company to begin immediate reclamation of the abandoned paddocks before more lives are lost,” Kana said.

He also called on the Nasarawa State Government to intensify its regulatory oversight and ensure full compliance with the Mining Act, stressing that mining companies must be held accountable for the safety and well-being of host communities.

Kana revealed that the court, presided over by Justice Rose Soji in Keffi, had granted an interim injunction on November 19, 2024, which barred the company from any further mining activity or harassment of the community until the matter was resolved.

Subsequently, the parties reached an out-of-court settlement, resulting in a consent judgment granted on March 4, 2025.

The judgment included legally binding terms, such as the submission of a detailed reclamation plan for the 50-meter setback within one year of further excavation.

The deceased children have since been buried by Islamic rites in Udege Mbeki, an Afo-speaking community.