

# One dead as mother, three children found unconscious in Benue

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| By John Charles

Five members of the same family were discovered unconscious in their home at Akaajime community, Gboko Local Government Area of Benue State, on Wednesday, with one confirmed dead.

The victims – a mother and her four children – were found in a coma before neighbours rushed them to a private hospital in Gboko.

One of the children, a four-year-old boy, was reported dead before help arrived.

A family member who identified herself as Mohivinze Terkura told journalists that she escaped the tragedy after spending the night in her aunt's house due to heavy rain.

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According to Terkura, she only returned to their residence around 10 am on Wednesday to discover that her mother and siblings had yet to open the door of their house, as it was locked from the inside.

“I did not come back home to sleep due to heavy rain yesterday, and I decided to sleep in my aunt’s house, but when I returned home this morning, I met the door still shut, and several attempts to open the door failed.

“So, I decided to force the door open, only to find my mother and other siblings unconscious.

“Upon seeing them in that condition, I immediately raised an alarm, which drew the attention of our neighbours who came and assisted me to convey them to the nearest hospital. However, before we could get to the hospital, my younger brother, who was four years old, had died,” she said.

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She further said she could not ascertain what led to the incident, but noted that, “When we forced the door open, I noticed an unusual smell of chemical-like cooking gas in the room. But we don’t have a gas cooker in the entire house, nor do we use insecticide in our house aside from mosquito nets that we use constantly.”

One of the victims, who was later resuscitated by the doctor at the hospital, told journalists that he woke up to prepare for school activities but couldn’t move from the bed.

“I called our mother, but she could not answer me. Only for me to discover that all of us in the room were unconscious, and were helpless till my sister returned this morning at about 10 am. Regrettably, my brother died in the process,” he said.

When contacted on the phone, Dr Joshua Atime of Vawar Hospital, Akaajime, Gboko, confirmed that some patients of the same family were brought to his hospital on Wednesday morning, but that they had been transferred to the General Hospital, Gboko, after stabilising them.

Meanwhile, the Chairman of Gboko LGA, Torseer Yina, said he had yet to receive a formal report about the incident.

He said, “I have not received any formal information about the incident, but I saw it on social media, and that is where I learned about it.”

Efforts to get a reaction from the state Police Command were unsuccessful as the command's Public Relations Officer, DSP Udeme Edet, did not respond to texts or calls put across to her cell phone.