

• Igwe of Ogui Nike, Enugu State, Igwe Tony Ojakuwa (NACC), during a courtesy visit to the Igwe in Enugu yesterday. Photo: NAN

Masquerade chases 5-month-old baby to death in Imo

From **GEORGE ONYEJIUWA, Owerri**

Tragedy struck on Monday at Amakohia Ubi community in Owerri West Council Area of Imo State, as a five-month-old baby boy slipped from the hands of his minder, a 10-year-old girl, who was being chased by a masquerade and fell inside a large boiling pot of soup.

An eye witness told Daily

Sun that the 10-year-old girl, who also suffered severe injuries, was fleeing from one of the "Owu" masquerades that had chased her in front of a house while carrying the deceased toddler and as she ran to the back of the house, she stumbled and the toddler slipped from her hands and fell into a pot of soup being prepared by a food vendor.

According to the witness, the masquerade, on realising the havoc caused, took

to his heels.

However, efforts to revive the baby proved abortive as the baby was pronounced dead by a doctor, after some good Samaritans rushed him to a nearby hospital.

When Daily Sun visited the scene, parents of the deceased baby were still in a state of shock and refused to speak to the press as sympathisers besieged their residence.

The Amakohia masquer-

ade festival also known as "Owu" is the most dreaded festival in Owerri West Council as it is characterised by display of charms, constant flogging and harassment. Meanwhile, the festival, which normally lasts a month, has been temporarily suspended as a result of the incident.

When contacted, the Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Andrew Enwerem (DSP), said he had no details of the incident yet.

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