

## AbujaMETRO

# UniAbuja day of rage, sorrow

## ■ As reckless driver kills final year student

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**A**foke Rufus Ebegba, a student of the Biology Department of the University of Abuja, had tidied up her activities for the day in preparation for her project defence, the final lap of her degree programme at the university.

She had headed home in high spirit to come the next day and face the panel. But that next day and the planned project defence never came for her. Just after she had stepped out of the campus to the major road to catch a bus to Gwagwalada, the least expected happened. The promising young lady was knocked down by a reckless driver whose vehicle had no headlamp at about 7.30pm.

The hit was so bad Afoke didn't get the opportunity of being rushed to the hospital for an effort to save her life. She died just on the spot after bleeding profusely from several wounds that riddled her body.

On the Thursday she died, she had been asked to return the next day to defend her project, which her colleagues and friends said she had put in her best to prepare for, but the cold hands of death snatched her away on her way home from school. That incident understandably became a vreason for anger and sorrow for her colleagues, who argue that this was another needless death that could have been prevented, if there was a school bus to shuttle students home from the campus to Gwagwalada; or if there was a speed breaker to slow down vehicles in front of the school gate. With these, they argued that she wouldn't have had to cross the road and be hit by a vehicle that was driving without light.

According to Abdulsalam Hamza, a student of Botany, also in the Biology Department of the university and the content developer for @Gwagz\_Facts, a social platform that provides information about activities in and around the school as well as historical facts about Abuja and environs, it is high time their lives were properly valued by the school authority, and the government must live up to their responsibilities and stop their colleagues from dying from preventable causes.

"UNIABUJA is a school where things are done wrongly and students are ready to say enough is enough", he fumed. Continuing, he said, "this is a sad day for me reporting about my friend and course mate. We all talked and laughed today with other friends.

Her last PM on BBM was 'I will survive UNIABUJA' if only she knew she would be no more few hours after that. On getting the news of her death, her family prayed and cried, asking God for a miracle but Afoke still laid breathless and lifeless. Her mother continued to say 'my daughter, our agreement was that you said I would soon be a grandmother.'

Eyewitnesses said: "The first person that got to the scene was Ozo, a fellow course mate. He felt her pulse and knew she was gone that minute. Her body had

fractures all over with blood gushing out from every part. It was already dark when she was killed and most of the students had to trek from inside the campus to the gate, as there was little or no form of transportation in the school premises. All lecturers had left with just one remaining that joined in helping the situation. Students gathered and tried to slow down or stop vehicles but most of them didn't stop, as there were no street lights in front of the main campus to even notice what was really happening and neither were there speed breakers either.

"Due to unavailability of ambulance, her body was carried in a pickup truck covered with a piece of cloth to the medical centre in the mini campus. The case was no longer treated as an emergency as she was already gone. We waited for the arrival of the doctor to confirmed her dead and did the necessary paperwork before she could be moved to the mortuary in the UniAbuja specialist hospital with the same pickup truck.

Her friends and colleagues were in tears and couldn't believe what was happening since earlier they were all laughing and happy.

When Afoke's family was contacted, they immediately rushed down about an hour later. The mum and dad wept bitterly, saying to no one in particular, "this is not my Afoke", and asking 'Afoke, why?' Students on seeing the reaction of Afoke's parents joined, weeping and shouting and crying. Some wanted to vent their anger and grief on the two lectures around, holding them responsible for the incident, as they were part of the reason the students were still in school that late.

"The external examiner was quoted by some students, as saying few hours before the unfortunate incident that 'no success comes without pain,' Hamza told *Abuja Metro*. The lecturers had to quickly device means to calm frayed nerves, saying the incident was natural, as they could never have foreseen it coming.

Hamza also recalled that the Student Union Government Provost and other officials had resolved to block the main campus entrance the next day after the incident to prevent the Sandwich exams from holding and the continuation of the project defence.

He added that students did not depart the mortuary of the hospital until 10pm, bemoaning the tragedy that befell them. On Afoke's parents' request, her corpse was transferred to the Asokoro hospital from the Gwagwalada Specialist Hospital. With the help of course mates and two lecturers, the death certificate was obtained at the UniAbuja school clinic for the corpse to be put in a condition to be moved.

Hamza said: "The paperwork took hours to complete and it was also a shocking revelation that the mortuary attendants actually did nothing all night to tidy the body of the deceased in readiness for transfer to the Asokoro hospital. Afoke's corpse was escorted by a large turnout of students and lecturers to Aso-



Afoke

koro hospital.

"The HOD of Biology Department, J. R. Solomon, joined us at the hospital as we later proceeded from there to the family house of the deceased in Karu. Friends and well wishers of the aggrieved family were present and songs of praise were sang to the Lord by the members of their church.

"The HOD on behalf of UniAbuja sympathised with the parents and promised a return visit from the school and also pledged the school support in whichever way possible.

The father of the deceased in his remarks blamed the school authorities for his loss and complained bitterly of how things are done in the school. He recalled that he did his masters degree programme in UniAbuja but had to leave midway as the school couldn't handle project properly.

But Afoke's mother was overcame with grief that she had no word to utter. It was about 2pm, when the students left their leave from the deceased residence back to Gwagwalada.

Hamza said the SUG officials informed the students of a planned meeting with the VC of the university on Monday, November 10, to proffer a quick solution to the bitter situation amongst which are absence of speed breakers and street lights within and outside the school premises.

According to the obituary announcement by the Rufus Ebegba family, a wake held in honour of Afoke on Monday, November 10 at the St. Ephraim Catholic Church, Phase 1, Jikwoyi, where she was buried at the Karu Cemetery on Tuesday, November 11, after a funeral service in Jikwoyi.