

Mystery: Missing children found dead in a parked car in Enugu community

Police launch manhunt of culprits

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Enugu State Police Command has launched a full-scale investigation to unravel the circumstances surrounding the death of three children inside a parked Camry car at Ugwu Ogede in Itchi, Igbo-Eze South Local Government of the State.

The three children/victims of different parents, five-year-old Chukwuebuka Ene (boy), four-year-old Chinyere Eze and four-year-old Chibugo Eze, both female were among five children declared missing on Sunday after they had gone to fetch water at a commercial borehole owned and located at the home of a former police officer, but did not return home.

The other two, three-year-old Kingsley Eze (male) and 12-year-old Mmasichukwu Eze (female), were lucky as they were rescued alive and taken to hospital where they were been resuscitated.



Parents of the children two of who came from a neighbouring community, Nkalagu-Okpuku, in the same Local Government, had raised alarm when their children who were said to have gone to the said borehole at about 8 am on Sunday to fetch water did not return home.

Amidst the confusion and panic, they raised search parties who ransacked every corner of the community but could not find the missing children.

However, the children were said to have been discovered according to the traditional ruler, Igwe Ike Oke, who said: 'We were almost frustrated in our search when a community member who went to fetch water heard the voice of a little child calling her name. She traced the voice to a car that had been parked for over six months in the compound where she discovered the children and raised the alarm.

'We found three of the children already dead by the time we opened the car. I think they suffocated to death because the car doors were stiff when we tried to open them at first but we engaged an artisan who forced the car open.'

The State Police Public Relations Officer, Mr Daniel Ndukwe (ASP), who confirmed the incident yesterday said the Police moved into action immediately the alarm was raised and rescued the two that were alive.

He said: 'On 23/11/2020 at 0940 hrs the Command received a report made at Igbo-Eze South Divisional Headquarters that three children were found dead in a parked Toyota Camry Car in Itchi Community of Igbo-Eze South Local Government Area. On receipt of the report, Operatives of the Division dashed to the scene and found two of the children still alive, while three others were lifeless. The surviving children were immediately taken to the hospital for medical attention, while the lifeless ones have been deposited in the mortuary for medical autopsy.'

While disclosing that the Commissioner of Police, CP Ahmad AbdurRahman had directed the transfer of the case to the State CID and the launch of a full-scale investigation to ascertain the cause of their death as well as arrest and prosecute the culprits, Ndukwe confirmed that one suspect had already been arrested in connection with the case.

Igwe Oke further said: 'One of the two children rescued said they went to fetch water but didn't meet anyone at the borehole because the owner and the entire members of the family had gone to church service.

'He informed us that they were about going home when three hooded men came from a hill beside the scene of the incident, abducted them and bundled them into the car and left. He said they were all dressed in red cloths. He also said that the hoodlums returned at the middle of the night to take them away but they couldn't open the car doors because they were stiff.

'We are still investigating the incident and the dead victims have been deposited in the mortuary. The owner of the house has been arrested by the police.'

The State's police boss has tasked parents/guardians to be vigilant and take good care of their children/wards, especially in the "Ember" months period, and reassured the emplacement of adequate security.