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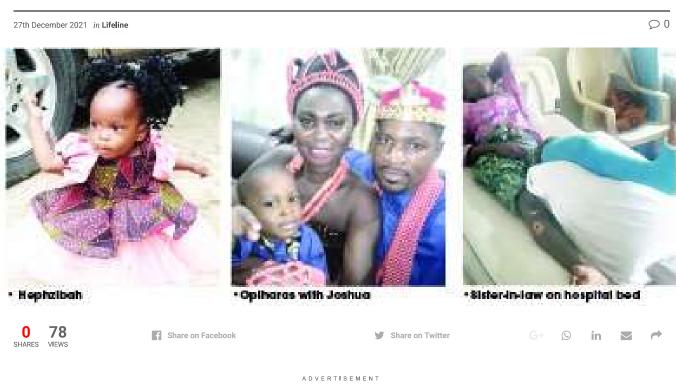
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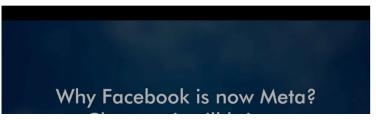
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Man seeks justice for 2 children allegedly killed by task force personnel

•We don't have task force in Obio/Akpor -Press secretary







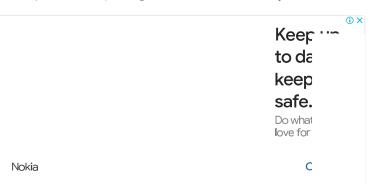


From Tony John, Port Harcourt

Mr. Segun Opihara, from Edo State, whose two children, Master Joshua Opihara and Miss Hephzibah Opihara, were allegedly killed by task force officials, has cried out for justice.

The victims, Joshua (aged three years and two months) and Hephzibah (a year and six months old), were said to have been hit by a task force bus with officials (four men inside) chasing another vehicle. The vehicle's plate number was Abuja GWA 326 XA.

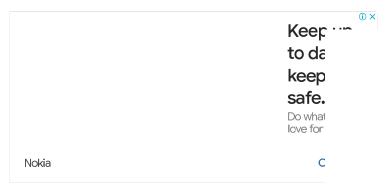




The distraught father, in a telephone interview, told Daily Sun that he was still in shock and unable to believe that his children had died in a jiffy.

It was gathered that the incident occurred on Monday, December 13, 2021, around Easy Motors Bus Stop, 316 Aba Road, in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State. According to a source, the victims were standing by the side of the road with their mother's sister, waiting to cross the road, when the task force bus, which was driving against traffic, hit three of them and sped off.

He said the girl died instantly, while the boy died in the hospital after he had expended huge amounts of money. According to him, the sister-in-law is recuperating from injuries in hospital.



However, the Obio/Akpor LGA has denied working with any task force in whatever name or guise.

Mr. Opihara said: "My children were killed by a driver of a mini-bus that was chasing another bus. We found out that the four occupants of the mini-bus were Obio/Akpor task force.

"While my children were standing by the roadside, watching the right direction to cross, the mini-bus hit them. That was how my children were killed.

"I was in the office when I was called. Before I could rush down, my daughter had already gone. Not believing it, I had to rush her a to a nearby clinic, where it was confirmed that she had died.

"Before, I knew what was happening, my son was taken to several hospitals. Yet, he didn't survive the accident. He died on Tuesday night."

On how he has taken the incident, Opihara said: "I have not got hldof myself. As a speak to you, I am not myself. I can't express myself now. I'm trying to hold myself but it is not easy."

The traumatized father told the reporter that one of the task force members was apprehended by traffic police officers. He said the bus was impounded and taken to Mini-Okoro Police Division headquarters, Old Aba Road, Port Harcourt.

"The driver, in an attempt to escape, hit another vehicle and stopped. That was when the police traffic warder suspected that the bus must be on wrong movement and arrested the person inside. The person police arrested was not the one that drove the vehicle. Others escaped."

Opihara expressed sadness that the recklessness of the task force officials led to the death of his children. He called on relevant authorities to rescue society from the inhumane activities of suspected task force personnel.

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He said: "I am appealing to the police and government to fish out these murderers of my beloved children. I am begging groups, members of the public, whichever way you can help me and my family to get justice, do so. The perpetrators of this dastardly act must be fished out.

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"This is a murder case; police and government should not take it for granted. The task force men killed my children. They must be arrested and made to face the law for the crime they committed. If they are not apprehended and made to face the law and justice is denied, this evil will continue in the society and it is dangerous.

"Money cannot bring these children back. But justice must prevail. The house-help that was with them is still in the clinic. My sister-in-law was the one that backed my daughter. The bus driver hit them and ran away as if the victims were not human beings. They were not chickens. They are human beings. If the driver and his team are not arrested and made to face justice, it would give a wrong signal to our society.

"Please, I am begging members of the public to come and help me out. I am in distress; I really need help this moment. The driver of the mini-bus that that killed my children must be arrested. No matter where he and others have escaped to, the blood of my innocent children will haunt them."

He said his wife, Modupe, has been traumatized since the incident, crying day and night.

When the reporter spoke to Opihara, he said he was at the Mini-Okoro Divisional Police Headquarters to get updates on the incident.

However, the local government authority has said that there was nothing like a task force working either directly or indirectly for the council.

The denial was made by Mr. Ichenwo Goodluck, chief press secretary to the council chairman, George Ariolu, when Daily Sun contacted him for a reaction.

Goodluck stated that the chairman, on assumption of office, disbanded every form of task force, in a bid to sanitize Obio/Akpor LGA and create a conducive business environment for residents.

In a disclaimer signed by the media aide, he said firsthand information at the chairman's disposal from the father of the victims, Opihara, has it that the culprits, who were suspected to be operating an illegal vehicle detention dump along Aba Expressway, by Elelenwo axis, in a bid to illegally impound the vehicle of an unsuspecting citizen, ran into the victims, Joshua, Hephzibah and the sister-in-law, who were on their way back from school.

Goodluck said, on the chairman's order, he went to Mini-Okoro Police Station on Thursday, December 23, 2021, to get the true picture of the sad story.

The chairman's aide said findings revealed that one of the suspects, Mr. Thaedus Ulombo, from Okrika LGA, who confessed to being a record keeper at the illegal vehicle detention dump, is currently cooling off at the Mini-Okoro Police Station, while other imposters whose identities were not unconfirmed are still on the run.

The vehicle that knocked the innocent children was a grey mini-bus with the registration umber: Abuja GWA-326XA.

"For whatever it is worth, the council hereby states categorically that it has not constituted any task force to collect levies or tax and the council also warns the general public against having any financial transactions or paying money into individual accounts in the name of the council.

"The general public is by this disclaimer advised to immediately report to the council secretariat or nearest police station anyone suspected to be acting in the guise of a task force in the name of Obio/Akpor Local Government Council."

The council, however, commiserated with the grieving family on the loss of their lovely children.

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