

# Ebonyi: Day drunken Policeman wreaked havoc, crushed teenagers to death

Tears flowed like a river in the remote Agbaenyim village, Inyimagu community in Ikwo Local Government Area of Ebonyi State, when the remains of 11-year-old boy, Emmanuel Ifeanyi Ocheze, who was among the children that were crushed to death by a policeman, was committed to mother earth. UCHENNA INYA reports from Abakaliki

I want justice for my son, so that his soul can be at rest—grieving mother

Ifeanyi and others were crushed by a Police Inspector attached to the state police command, Isaac Jeremiah, a mobile policeman, an Igala from Kogi State, who was allegedly drunk while driving, which contributed to the fatal accident in front of eatery, Kilimanjaro, in Abakaliki, the state capital, where the incident occurred.

The tragedy occurred on Easter day. The Audi vehicle, which Isaac drove, ran on about seven children but Ifeanyi and an 18-year-old girl identified simply as Agatha, died on the spot. It was said that Agatha's mother, on receiving the news of the death her daughter, slumped and died immediately.

About three other victims involved in that accident, died few days later in the hospital. Ifeanyi's stomach was ripped open, which brought out his intestines while his head and back were broken.

Morticians had to stitch his head and intestine while in the morgue where the boy's body was preserved pending his burial, which took place last Saturday in his Agbaenyim village, Inyimagu community, Ikwo Local Government Area of the state. Ifeanyi was a student of Ebonyi State University Staff School, Abakaliki and was in JSS 2 before his untimely death.

About three teenagers survived the incident after receiving medical attention while two of the victims later died in the Federal Teaching Hospital, Abakaliki, where they were taken for the medical attention.

Ifeanyi lived at No 13 Nsugbe Street Abakaliki with his parents and siblings.

He was returning from Easter Retreat alongside his friends in their church, All Saints Anglican Church, located along Ogoja road, Abakaliki, on that fateful Easter Day, when tragedy struck.

## Police shun support, Ifeanyi's burial

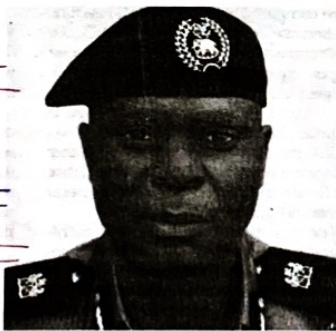
The State Police Command did not attend Ifeanyi's burial. Inspector Isaac Jeremiah did not attend, neither did any representative of the Police Command attend the burial, which attracted dignitaries from all walks of life. Inspector Isaac and the state police command did not also bear the financial burden arising from Ifeanyi's issue.

Ifeanyi's Boys Brigade group members attended the burial and gave him full honour with full parade and other activities. The deceased's family members observed the parade, which lasted for almost one hour. The family members inspected the parade in his honour. One of Ifeanyi's sisters, Victoria, decorated his casket with the brigade attires before the commencement of the parade.

The attires, which included the Brigade cap, shoes, clothes and other materials were later handed to his father by the Brigade at the graveside in accordance with the organization's tradition before the casket was lowered



At the burial



CP Olaleye



The late Ifeanyi



The grieving mother

to the grave.

Ifeanyi died while serving God-Clergy. In his sermon at the burial, which was titled "The Mortal Enemy, All Must Face", Rev. Tochukwu Diala said Ifeanyi ran a good race while on earth and urged the mourners and sympathizers to emulate his virtues. He described the boy as someone, who dedicated his short life to serve God with his talents.

"At the accident scene, I went there and saw Ifeanyi carrying good news bible, a big yellow bible. It was not a pocket bible; it was a big bible that he was carrying. He was doing the work of Christ and that is my only consolation. "Ifeanyi died while serving Christ and that is to say that he is among the holy ones, the Saints who are resting, awaiting resurrection. Ifeanyi did his work well and it pleased God to call him to leave this sinful and stressful world", he stated.

The clergy urged the mourners, sympathizers and all those who attended the burial to get prepared for death which he said, can come at anytime and advised them to live a good life like the deceased while preparing for it.

## Brigade: We must get justice for him

Esomchi Ahamfula Joseph, captain of 11th Abakaliki Company, who is also the Battalion Council Chairman, Abakaliki Battalion Coun-

cil of the Brigade, described the action of the state police command on Ifeanyi's death as unfair.

He told Sunday Telegraph at the burial ceremony that the Brigade will take up the matter to bring the perpetrator to book.

"We have our different arms, procedures and protocols. We will take the matter up through the Battalion Council Legal Adviser in conjunction with the State Council Legal Adviser. Their looking into the matter, will do everything legally possible to bring the perpetrator of this act to book. Not seeing the police in the burial is very unfair and disheartening.

"When we were preparing to come for the burial, we met some questions: Will the police come? It was even on Thursday that I came to know that the perpetrator is a policeman. It was on that Thursday, a day to the burial that one of the officers in our Battalion informed me that the perpetrator is a policeman. I didn't know that it is a policeman that caused Ifeanyi's death.

"We were hoping that there will be a police van attached to the ambulance that carried Ifeanyi's body but lo and behold, we didn't see any. So, it is disheartening. But like I said, we will follow everything with due process through our Legal Adviser", he stated.

He described Ifeanyi as a unique, talented

boy, who made impact that cannot be measured while alive, adding that his death has created vacuum that cannot be filled by anyone.

"Ifeanyi is somebody that is unique in his way, in the sense that he is a boy that has a reputable character, a character that could be emulated, a character that every other boy is being asked to look upon Ifeanyi. His punctuality to the things of the Boys Brigade can never be erased because he is always available in every practice. In every rehearsal, in every activities that Boys Brigade has held in this Abakaliki Battalion Council.

"The impact Ifeanyi made cannot be measured. He is known in every activity. So, we are feeling his loss so much. Currently, the gap is already there. How we lost him is like a mirage; a boy coming out Easter Retreat and was just on his way home and he was killed. So, his death is a sad one to the Boys Brigade, Ebonyi State Council and Boys Brigade in Nigeria in general.

"He is a boy everybody was looking up to. He was supposed to be among those trained to be part of the state council band squad. The Acting Secretary has already shortlisted his name to the state council training band Commander to look into him and enlist him, so that