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## Breaking News

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## Puzzle over death of Police Inspector in Ebonyi

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- Family petitions IGP, NOPRIN

By Esther Onyegbula

The family of Police Inspector Michael Udoh Idiong attached to Ishielu Police Station, Ebonyi State Command, who was reportedly killed by a reckless lorry driver on February 19 this year has petitioned the Inspector General of Police, Mr Solomon Arase accusing the police and the hospital he was taken to of negligence leading to his death.

The incident reportedly happened after an unnamed lorry driver drove

recklessly and ran over the middle-aged Inspector while he was on duty with his colleagues. The driver was said to have been detained after the incident but family members to the deceased doubted the claim saying no one saw the suspect in police custody.

The family was also expressed disappointment with the reaction of the divisional police officer in-charge of the station to his wounded colleague after the incident.



Late Inspector, Michael Udoh

### *Son of the deceased speaks*

Raymond Michael, the deceased Inspector's son narrated how his father was allegedly killed to Crime Alert.

He said, " At about 6am on the 19th of February, 2016, I saw a missed call from my father's phone number but I did not immediately call back, hoping that

he would call me again. Shortly after, my mother called and told me that someone had also called her with her husband's (my father's) phone number and informed her that he had an accident the previous night, and asked if there was anyone in Ebonyi who could come and stay with him at the hospital, as he (the caller) wanted to leave the hospital.

### ***Trip to Ebonyi from Calabar***

"My mother immediately left Calabar for Ebonyi and on getting to my father's station- Ishielu Police Station, Ebonyi State Command she was taken to Maria Ines Hospital, Umuzoke – Ezillo Abakaliki, where my father was receiving treatment. She met him unconscious, with plasters on his head and a deep cut on his hand. My mother inquired what happened to her husband and how it happened, but she was told 'you should even thank your God you met him alive.'"

### ***At Ishielu Police station***

Raymond further stated that his mother approached the Divisional Police Officer of Ishielu Police Station and he told her that his father had an accident involving a 911 lorry, but failed to offer any explanation as to how the accident happened. He said; "My father regained some consciousness but, could not say what happened to him; he only managed to mumble few incomprehensible words, not relating to what happened to him. On the 22nd of February when the plaster on my father's head was removed to dress the wound, my mother discovered that he had a stitched deep cut on the head.

### ***Doctors at war***

"On the 25th of February, the doctor who had been attending to him took a day off and another doctor took over treatment. But when the first doctor resumed the next day, he complained that the second doctor and the

nurses were not treating him according to his prescriptions in the patient's file. The DPO told my mother that the lorry driver was detained at the police station awaiting arraignment in court." Mr Raymond added that his late father did not receive the necessary medical attention and this led to his death.

### ***Petitions IGP and NOPRIN***

The family has therefore petitioned the Inspector – General of Police through the Network For Police Reform in Nigeria (NOPRIN) alleging that the Inspector died because of the shabby treatment he received from the hospital which they alleged lacked equipments such as oxygen, needed to sustain him coupled with alleged negligence from the police in Ishielu division. The petition signed by Okechukwu Nwaguma the National Coordinator of NOPRIN urged the IGP to investigate the hospital and the policemen in the division over the demise of the Inspector.

### ***Failure to carry out autopsy***

He said " NOPRIN hereby requests the IGP to order an investigation to establish the actual cause of death including ascertaining the role of the 'lorry driver', the man presented as his 'brother', and why the DPO did not ensure an autopsy, but was more interested in seeing that the deceased was hurriedly buried. The other officers who were said to have been on duty with the Inspector when the 'accident' happened should also be required to say what they know. The Inspector was on the 27th February, referred to the Teaching Hospital in Abakaliki and the doctors said he needed a CT scan to ascertain if there was blood in his brain, but the Teaching Hospital didn't have the CT scanner, and complained that he should have been brought earlier so that he could be stabilized. On February 28th he was taken to Enugu for the scan but he eventually died later that evening.

### ***No police representation during burial***

“The deceased Inspector’s wife requested the police to make the police ambulance available for her to convey her husband’s corpse home to Calabar, but the police said their ambulance was not in order. His children rallied and got an ambulance for N30, 000 to convey the remains, and the DPO hesitantly gave the wife the sum of N10, 000 but refused her request for a police escort to convey the corpse home. She had to accompany her husband’s corpse alone. The police also refused to carry out an autopsy on the body of the deceased Inspector who had served the Police Force for 33 years. The deceased Police Inspector was awaiting a promotion to the next rank of Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) between March and April 2016.

### ***Cause of death still unknown***

“The injuries on the deceased Inspector’s head and hand were deep cuts, not bruises and were both stitched. The family finds it curious how an accident with a lorry could just cause deep cuts on the head and hand. The police are yet to give the family any detailed, convincing and satisfactory explanation as to how the so-called accident that resulted to the death of their breadwinner happened.”

### ***Unseen driver charged***

The petition further read “ The family learned that the Inspector was on night duty with his colleagues on that fateful night when the ‘accident’ happened. Before the Inspector’s corpse was conveyed from Ebonyi to Calabar, the DPO had on Monday, 29th February, told the Inspector’s wife that the lorry driver had been charged to court, although the family never had the opportunity to see him and ask him questions or to even hear from any of the other officers who were on duty with the Inspector.”