

Reps probe alleged killing of teenage boy by Army officer in Delta

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By Levinus Nwabughio, Abuja

House of Representatives, yesterday, mandated its Committee on Army to investigate the circumstances that led to the murder of 18-year-old Cyril Obruche allegedly by an officer

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The committee is to appraise why officers and men of the Nigerian Army were drafted to guard a private company despite their current challenge of low numerical strength.

To this end, the House directed the Chief of Army Staff, Lt Gen. Farouk Yahaya, to immediately redeploy the officers involved in the security of the private companies.

The House also directed the Inspector-General of Police, Usman Baba, to ensure that Presco Plc immediately remove the gate it erected across the farm access road in the affected community to forestall further breakdown of law and order.

The House further directed the management of Presco Plc to compensate the deceased family without delay. The resolutions of the House followed the consideration of a motion of urgent public importance moved at the plenary by Ben Igbakpa representing Ethiope federal constituency of Delta State. Presenting the motion, Igbakpa said on March 28, 2022, an Army officer attached to Presco Plc shot dead in broad day light, 18-year-old Cyril Obruche, a secondary school student of Delta Steel Company (DSC) Staff School, Ovwian, Aladja, Delta State.

He said: “Presco Plc without recourse to the community and the relevant government agencies in the state unilaterally erected a gate on the only access road constructed by Niger Delta Development Commission, NDDC, to enable the community access their farms for their livelihood.

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The deceased with several members of the community had on the later day visited the management of the company to complain that the gate was obstructing their access to their farms and requested that the company should remove the said gate from the road or create an alternative road for them.

“While discussions were on going, an Army officer attached to the company brought out his AK-47 rifle and shot the deceased, Cyril Obruche, who died on the spot. “The Army officer in apparent display of raw power shot dead a harmless citizen of this country with impunity and without legal justification. Despite the insecurity in the country, officers and men of the Nigerian Army are stationed at a peaceful community and attached to a private company, Presco Plc, a palm oil producing company that purchases fresh fruit bunches and palm kernel from farmers, whereas such officer(s) ought to have been deployed to trouble spots of the country requiring army personnel to help combat insurgency and secure the lives and property of the people.

“Unless appropriate machinery are put in place to unravel why officers and men of the Nigerian Army are posted to guard private companies when their services are urgently needed elsewhere and also thoroughly investigate the circumstances that led to the murder of Master Cyril Obruche by the said Army officer with a view to bringing the culprit(s) to book, the security of lives and property of the once peaceful Ovre-Eko community in Ethiope East LGA of Delta State may no longer be guaranteed.”

Igbakpa added that the unhealthy development has triggered spontaneous protests and demonstrations by members of the community, which led to breakdown of law and order. Adopting the motion, the House gave the committee two weeks within which to conclude the assignment and report back for further legislative action.

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