

**METRO**

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**NMA declares strike in 3 Lagos hospitals over colleague's death**

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The Lagos State Chapter of the Nigeria Medical Association, NMA, on Wednesday, directed doctors in government hospitals on the island – the General Hospital, Lagos; Lagos Island Maternity Hospital, and Massey Street Children Hospital – to commence indefinite strike over the death of their colleague, Dr. Diaso Vwaere, on Tuesday, in an elevator accident in the Lagos State General Hospital, in Odan area of the state.

The NMA also declared a five-day statewide mourning period, saying that the strike would be sustained until investigations into the incident are completed and justice served. Already, the Lagos State Government says it has set up a panel of inquiry to unravel the circumstances leading to the death of the late House Officer.

Vwaere, a medical house officer undergoing housemanship at the hospital, died as a result of injuries sustained when she was trapped in an elevator at the Lagos General Hospital, for more than 40 minutes.

The medical doctors, under the auspices of the Lagos NMA, who described her death as avoidable, demanded an immediate, unbiased investigation into the circumstances surrounding the unfortunate incident, even as they stressed that all those found culpable must be brought to justice.

In a press statement jointly signed by the Chairman, NMA Lagos State, Dr Benjamin Olowojebutu, and Secretary, Dr Ismail Ajibowo, the doctors commiserated with the family of the deceased, even as they described her death as avoidable.

The statement reads in parts: “NMA Lagos State received with rude shock the death of one of our members, Dr Diaso Vwaere, a medical house officer, whose death occurred as a result of injuries sustained when the elevator she was in crashed.

“This is heartbreaking, heart-wrenching, and quite unfortunate. We commiserate with her immediate family, her colleagues on the Island, the Medical Guild, and all body of doctors in Lagos State. Information we got was that she was trapped in the elevator for more than 40mins before she was rescued.

“We were also reliably informed that there was no blood available for resuscitation, and this has become a recurring issue as a result of the review made by the government on the previous policy on blood donation. To us, this was an avoidable death and, unfortunately, it was allowed to happen. We are pained and we are mourning.

“We are well aware that this same elevator has been a source of problem for many years during which several complaints have been made to all relevant agencies with no respite. It is very painful that at a time when the country is battling with unprecedented brain drain, a young colleague that would have been expected to attend to 6000 Nigerians was allowed to die a needless death.

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this matter, especially the General Manager of the Lagos State Infrastructure Management Agency, Mrs. Adenike Adekambi, are all brought to Justice.

“We direct all our doctors in the three government hospitals on the Island (General Hospital, Lagos, Lagos Island Maternity Hospital, and Massey Street Children Hospital) to commence indefinite strike action until the investigations are completed and justice served. We immediately direct our doctors in all the other government hospitals to scale down activities as a mark of respect for our dead colleague. Only emergency services should be rendered for the next five days.

“The government should as a matter of urgency commence the complete overhaul of the house officers’ quarters on the Island; all other infrastructures in all our government hospitals that need repairs should be urgently attended to. That the blood transfusion system in Lagos State needs immediate revamping for improved services.

“As a result of this sad incident, the State Officers Committee of the Nigerian Medical Association Lagos State has decided that the upcoming Annual General Meeting will be a low-key event as a mark of respect to our colleague.

“We appeal to our colleagues to remain calm as NMA Lagos State leadership is on top of the situation and will leave no stone unturned in ensuring that justice is not just served but seen to have been served. We pray for the repose of the soul of our dead colleague and may God give us all the fortitude to bear this irreparable and unfortunate loss.”

#### Lagos sets up panel of inquiry

Meanwhile, the Lagos State Government has set up a panel of inquiry to unravel the circumstances leading to the death of the late Vwaere. Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Information and Strategy, Olumide Sogunle, who announced the setting up of the panel in a statement, expressed shock at the news.

“The State Government, especially management and staff of the Lagos State Ministry of Health, commiserate with the family of the deceased on the unfortunate loss of their daughter who passed on as a result of the mechanical failure of an elevator at the General Hospital, Odan, Lagos Island.

“An inquiry by a team of officials from the Lagos State Ministry of Health, Lagos State Health Service Commission, Lagos State Safety Commission and certified Lift and Vertical Transportation Equipment experts has commenced. The Lagos State Government will ensure that anyone found negligent by the report of the inquiry will face appropriate sanctions,” Sogunle stated.

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