NAPTIP declares Speed Darlington wanted for rape, cyberbullying

Date: 2025-06-27

Source: https://punchng.com/breaking-naptip-declares-speed-darlington-wanted-for-rape-cyberbullying/

The National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons has declared Nigerian entertainer, Darlington Okoye, popularly known as Speed Darlington, wanted in connection with alleged offences including rape, cyberbullying, and cyberstalking.  
  
NAPTIP made this known via its official Instagram handle @officialnaptip on Friday afternoon.  
  
It read, “WANTED BY NAPTIP. Darlington Okoye, aka Speed Darlington, is wanted in connection with alleged offences including rape, cyberbullying, and cyberstalking.  
  
“Anyone with credible information on his whereabouts is urged to contact NAPTIP immediately. Call: 07030000203, [email protected].”  
  
The notice comes a month after Okoye failed to honour the agency’s invitation for questioning over his claim of having sex with a 15-year-old girl during a live Instagram video.  
  
NAPTIP had summoned Okoye over his statement in a now-viral Instagram video.  
  
A letter, signed by the agency’s Head of Cybercrime Response Team, Ngamaraju Mangzha, was addressed to Okoye on May 28, 2025.  
  
It asked the singer to appear at its Abuja head office at 09:00 a.m. on May 30, 2025.  
  
However, our correspondent who visited the agency’s headquarters at the time confirmed that the singer did not show up at NAPTIP’s Wuse Zone 5 office.  
  
Later, NAPTIP said it received an official response from Okoye, who claimed he could not visit. He insisted on appearing on June 26.  
  
In his response, Okoye said, “Hello, I will not be able to come in today. This is very sudden and urgent for me. I already have commitments and responsibilities.  
  
“I suggest you reschedule for next month, June 26. I will be in Abuja that day.”  
  
Our correspondent, who was at NAPTIP’s headquarters on June 26, observed that the singer failed to appear.  
  
NAPTIP replied in a letter signed by its Director of Information and Communications Technology & Coordinator, Cybercrime Response Team, Hakeem Lawal.  
  
Lawal wrote, “The Agency wishes to state that the invitation was sent to you on Wednesday, May 28, 2025, giving you sufficient time to prepare and appear as indicated.  
  
“Moreover, the issue at hand is of urgent National importance and requires an urgent response.  
  
He continued, “As such, NAPTIP will not be able to work with your schedule as stated in your response.  
  
However, you are further given till Monday, June 2, 2025, at 1:00 pm, to appear in person at the NAPTIP’s Headquarters: 2028, Dalaba Crescent, Wuse Zone 5, FCT, Abuja, for the interview.  
  
Lawal added, “Please, as stated in our earlier correspondence, your cooperation is very critical in this matter.”  
  
However, PUNCH Online observed that Okoye did not appear for questioning that Monday.  
  
The singer sparked outrage on Children’s Day after a livestream where he claimed he had once slept with a 15-year-old virgin. The clip quickly went viral, triggering widespread outrage from viewers and women’s-rights groups who accused him of confessing to statutory rape.  
  
Within 24 hours, the backlash drew official attention as the Lagos State government reported the matter to NAPTIP, which summoned Okoye for questioning.  
  
The summon letter read, “We write to formally invite you to appear before the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons in respect of certain video materials recently circulated online, including but not limited to a particular Instagram video wherein you allegedly made statements admitting to having engaged in sexual acts with an underage girl.  
  
It continued, “Additional archived videos, now in circulation, similarly contain admissions and degrading commentary concerning minors. These actions, if substantiated, constitute offences under the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Enforcement and Administration Act 2015, Cybercrime (Prohibition, Prevention, etc.) Act, 2015.  
  
The letter further stated, “⁠You are hereby invited to appear in person for an interview as regards the alleged actions on Friday, May 30, 2025, by 9 a.m. at the NAPTIP Headquarters: 2028 Dalaba Crescent, Wuse Zone 5, Abuja, FCT.  
  
It added, “Kindly bring along any legal representation or documents you may consider relevant. Please be informed that your cooperation is critical to ensuring a fair and thorough inquiry into the matter.”  
  
NAPTIP warned, “Failure to honour this invitation may result in further legal action.”  
  
Isaac Fayose, brother of former Ekiti State governor Ayo Fayose, also told journalists that the girl mentioned in the video intends to file a formal complaint with the police.  
  
Facing mounting pressure, Speed Darlington released follow-up posts insisting the “confession” was a publicity stunt to promote new music, saying bluntly, “I need controversy to eat.”  
  
In another post, he labelled the video “a prank.” Yet the about-face did little to calm critics, many of whom argued that joking about child sexual abuse is itself harmful.  
  
An official who spoke to our correspondent on the condition of anonymity said legal actions appear probable as the singer has missed two appointments. The official also stated that while NAPTIP is still weighing its options, it will not accept Okoye’s proposed June 26 date.  
  
“He has responded on two occasions, giving reasons for not coming. We will not work with his timing; we will soon come out with our position on this. No one is free in the eyes of the law,” the official said.  
  
Another official explained, “NAPTIP wrote to him, inviting him. First time, he replied that we should give him till June 26. He wrote to us, ‘Look, I cannot come because of this and that.’ The agency wrote back again to him that this issue is a matter of national importance that requires urgency.  
  
The Official continued, “The Agency will not work with your schedule. He replied again that he will insist on sticking to that date. Now, the agency is studying the situation.  
  
When we are making a decision like that, we usually consult with the relevant departments. And taking into consideration the legal implications of our action.  
  
“Don’t forget, even if we say we are taking him to court, they’ve been on strike, they just called it off. So, we are considering our options. But the management is reviewing his response so that we can take a very informed decision.”  
  
When asked if measures were in place to prevent Okoye from fleeing the country, NAPTIP’s Chief Press Officer, Mr Vincent Adekoye, said the agency is “working with all sister agencies” to ensure his appearance in Abuja.  
  
“NAPTIP is a proactive agency. We have activated the necessary partnership on this. We are collaborating with sister law enforcement agencies.  
  
“NAPTIP is exploring all elements to ensure that he comes to answer for what he said. We are not taking chances. We are working with all state and non-state actors on this matter,” Adekoye stated.  
  
In an earlier interview, Adekoye said NAPTIP’s Director-General, Binta Bello, was deeply concerned about Okoye’s claims.  
  
“We are concerned. Our DG is seriously concerned. She’s monitoring the situation by the hour. Why? It’s an issue that borders on a minor, the human rights of the minor, and sexual abuse. Anything could have happened to that girl.  
  
“He was not under duress. It was an admission. Look at what he released yesterday: a video saying that if he had known that this 15-year-old would generate this, he would have gone for a 12-year-old,” he explained.