

News

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Tension in Ebonyi over death of ex-deputy gov's father in kidnappers' den



Communities in Ikwo Local Government Area of **Ebonyi State** are enveloped by tension following the killing of the traditional ruler of Ndufu-Alike, Francis Igwe.

The traditional ruler's death at the hands of kidnappers has sparked outrage, grief and unrest across the area.

The late monarch, who was also the father of the immediate past Deputy Governor of Ebonyi State, Kelechi Igwe, was reportedly abducted on Sunday morning on his way to church.

His abduction sent shockwaves through the community and triggered frantic efforts by security agencies to secure his release.

However, hopes of rescuing the royal father alive were dashed when the police confirmed that he had been murdered by his captors.

In a statement issued on Friday, the Ebonyi State Police Command said the monarch was kidnapped on March 1, 2026.

According to the police spokesperson, Joshua Ukandu, operatives immediately launched an intensive rescue operation, using technical and intelligence resources after the incident was reported.

The police said the operation led to the arrest of two suspects believed to be members of the kidnapping syndicate.

“During interrogation, the suspects confessed that the monarch was killed on March 2.

“They further volunteered to lead operatives to their hideout and assist in the recovery of the remains of the monarch,” Ukandu stated.

Police operatives later moved to the suspected hideout, but the operation turned violent when other members of the gang allegedly opened fire on them.

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Security agents reportedly responded with superior firepower, leading to a gun battle.

During the confrontation, one of the suspected kidnappers was neutralised while others fled the scene.

The police spokesperson said seven additional suspects were subsequently arrested, bringing the total number of suspects in custody to nine.

A locally made pistol was also recovered from them.

Ukandu confirmed that the remains of the slain monarch were later recovered and deposited in a morgue for autopsy.

He added that investigations were ongoing and that the suspects would be charged to court upon completion of the investigation.

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The development has drawn strong reactions from the Ebonyi State Government.

Governor Francis Nwifuru, who described the incident as tragic and unacceptable, has directed security agencies to thoroughly investigate the circumstances surrounding the abduction and murder of the monarch.

In a show of solidarity, the governor cancelled the scheduled State Executive Council meeting and led members of the council to the palace of the late traditional ruler in Ndufu-Alike to commiserate with the bereaved family.

Nwifuru assured that all those involved in the crime would be apprehended and made to face the full weight of the law.

He described the slain monarch as an accomplished elder statesman and a courageous leader who served his people with dedication.

While offering prayers for the repose of his soul, the governor urged members of the family and the entire Ikwo Noyo clan to bear the loss with fortitude.

Responding on behalf of the family, Mr Kelechi Igwe expressed gratitude to the governor and security agencies for their efforts to rescue his father.

“Though our father is not here today to appreciate you, his entire family will remain eternally grateful for your efforts,” he said.

The killing of the respected monarch, however, ignited anger among youths in the community.

On Friday, irate youths reportedly went on the rampage, burning down houses believed to belong to suspected masterminds of the kidnapping and murder.

Videos showing buildings engulfed in flames quickly circulated on social media, further heightening tension in the area.

The youths also barricaded major roads leading into the community, causing disruption to movement and trapping several commuters.

Among those affected were students, staff, and lecturers of Alex Ekwueme Federal University, Ndufu-Alike Ikwo (AE-FUNAI), who were reportedly stranded due to the road blockade.

A team of military personnel later arrived in the community to restore order.

The soldiers dispersed the arsonists and cleared the barricades to allow normal movement to resume.

While normalcy has virtually returned to the area, the atmosphere remains tense as residents mourn the loss of a revered traditional ruler and await justice for his killing.