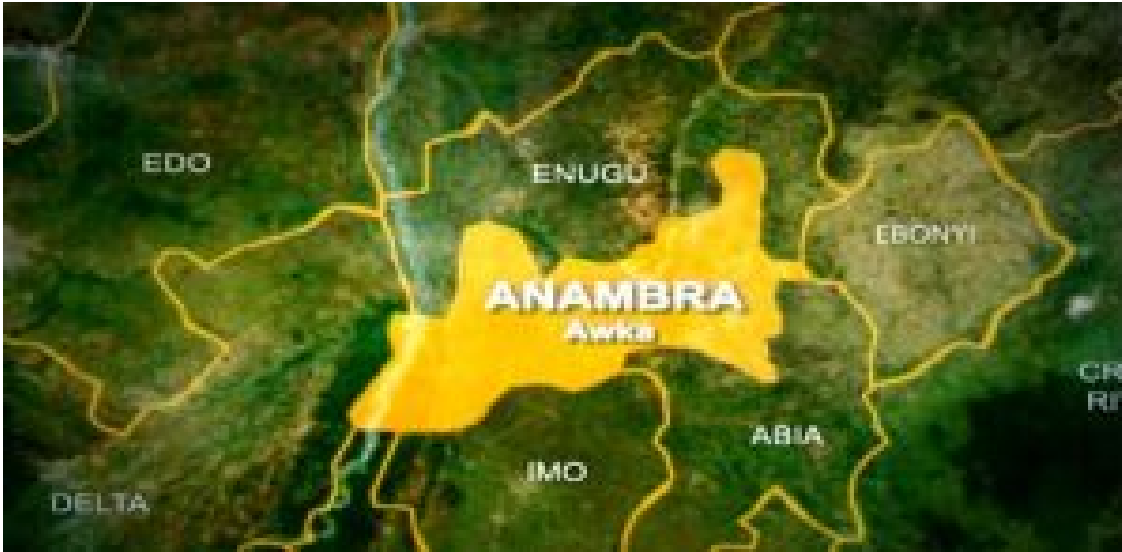


Police launch probe as octogenarian beaten to death in Anambra

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By Ikenna Obianeri

The Anambra State Police Command has begun an investigation into the death of an 80-year-old man, Paul Onwualu, who was allegedly beaten to death in Nkpor, Idemili North Local Government Area of the state.

The deceased, said to be one of the aspirants to the traditional stool of the community, reportedly died from injuries allegedly inflicted on him by policemen said to be attached to the Force Criminal Investigation Department, Abuja.

The incident is linked to an ongoing tussle over the community's traditional stool, a matter currently pending before a High Court in Suit No. HID/72/2026 sitting in Ogidi.

It was gathered that the security operatives, accompanied by some persons opposed to Onwualu's aspiration to the throne, stormed his residence on Thursday to arrest him. During the operation, he was allegedly assaulted and beaten into a coma.

Eyewitnesses said the octogenarian was forcefully bundled into a waiting police van and was being taken to the Ogidi Police Station when he reportedly collapsed.

He was subsequently rushed to the Iyi-Enu Mission Hospital, Ogidi, where doctors confirmed him dead on arrival.

One of the eyewitnesses said, "Some police officers stormed the old man's residence and attempted to arrest him. In the process, he was beaten into a coma and bundled into a waiting police vehicle.

"He collapsed on the way to the police station and was rushed to the Iyi-Enu Mission Hospital, where medical personnel confirmed him dead."

The deceased's wife, Anthonia Onwualu, who tearfully confirmed the incident to our correspondent on Tuesday, alleged that her husband was brutally assaulted before being whisked away.

"On Thursday, the police, in company with some people opposed to my husband's Igweship aspiration, stormed our residence in Umusiome and beat my husband into a coma before whisking him away to an unknown destination," she said.

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“I was later informed that they were taking him to Ogidi Police Station, but he died on the way and was rushed to Iyi-Enu hospital in Ogidi.

“The people who came with the police scaled the perimeter fence of our compound because the gate was locked,” she added.

Confirming the incident in a statement on Tuesday, the spokesman for the Anambra State Police Command, SP Tochukwu Ikenga, said the officers allegedly involved had been identified, but were not attached to the Anambra State Command.

He urged residents to remain calm, assuring that the circumstances surrounding the death were under investigation.

The statement read in part, “The Anambra State Police Command wishes to inform the public that it has commenced investigation into the circumstances surrounding the unfortunate death of the late Mr Paul Onwualu in Nkpor, Idemili North Local Government Area of Anambra State.

“Preliminary information available to the Command reveals that the officers allegedly involved in the arrest before the sudden complication of the deceased’s health, which later led to his death, have been identified, but are not operatives attached to the Anambra State Police Command.

“The Command assures Ndi Anambra and members of the public that the matter is being handled with the seriousness it deserves in order to ascertain the facts surrounding the unfortunate incident.”

Ikenga added that the Commissioner of Police in the state, CP Ikioye Orutugu, appealed to residents to remain peaceful and allow the investigation to run its course.

He reaffirmed the command’s commitment to transparency, professionalism, and the protection of lives and property, adding that further developments would be communicated in due course.