

Police Kill 7, Raze Community

...Over The Death Of 2 Of Their Officials

On September 14, 2006, at about 3.00pm, following the killing of a Divisional Police Officer (DPO), Mr. Elias Allison over 800 armed mobile policemen invaded the Afiesere community killing, maiming, looting, burning of properties. Scores of people were also captured and whisked away into detention. The community is a huge oil-producing one, a semi-urban community of a sort, in the Ughelli North Local Government Area of Delta State.

Chief John Akponana, the community leader and a high school principal told CEHRD investigator that, "We never had problem with the police. We are a peace loving people. In the early hours of that fateful Thursday, September 14, 2006, about 2 kilometres from our residential quarters, at the upper Afiesere road, the police had a problem with the motor park boys over motorpark management in Ughelli township and the police shot dead 3 of the boys. The motorpark boys later avenged the death of their colleagues by killing a DPO and an inspector. Not all the boys hail from Afiesere. The police know the boys who committed the crime because they have been working together. I say it again, it was not an Afiesere problem".

Chief Akponan had consistently granted interviews to the media repeating the position above. He further said that when the community wrote a petition to the government over the police action, the community representatives, top government officials from the Delta State Government and the police were summoned to a meeting at the Delta State Government House in Asaba, the capital of the state. "The police lied at the meeting and I stated our community position, but the police at the meeting threatened to arrest us, it took the intervention of the Deputy Governor to save us". The community spokesperson alleged.

The police had later told CEHRD monitor that a neighbouring community attacked Afiesere and looted their properties and not the police as the community claimed. But, CEHRD's further findings proved the police allegation contrary to the facts and implicated the police in the killings, sacking of the community and looting.