

# Murder: Community protests detention of monarch

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**L**EADERS of Ubahu Community in Nkanu East Local Government Area of Enugu State at the weekend protested the continued detention of their traditional ruler, Igwe Daniel Otenyi and three members of his cabinet at the Force Headquarters, in Abuja for alleged murder.

Life in the community had been overshadowed by threats of breakdown of law and order following the alleged killing last year of middle aged man by members of the vigilante team said to have been acting on the orders of the traditional ruler. The deceased relations had in a petition to the police alleged that the traditional ruler had turned the vigilante

group into a personal army with which he intimidated and extorted money from innocent villagers. They said the deceased and many others had been killed for leading a revolt against the practice.

The traditional ruler was reportedly arrested on December 18 last year, while returning to his home from Enugu alongside the three members of his cabinet by the police who whisked them away to Abuja and has not been released or charged to court since then.

Having failed to secure their bail, the community leaders said they decided to petition President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua to seek his intervention in the matter.

In the petition signed by

Chief Paul Nobu, a copy of which was made available to *Daily Champion* in Enugu, the petitioners alleged that the entire community had since the incident lived in fear, adding that the inhabitants were fleeing en masse following Police position on the matter.

Narrating the circumstances that led to the arrest of the monarch, Nobu disclosed that a notorious group, sponsored by some prominent people outside the community, had unleashed terror on the community on the first week of December, last year, which led to the destruction of property worth millions of naira.

Following the ugly development, he went on, the traditional ruler petitioned the Assistant Inspector General of Police in Zone 9, Umuahia, accusing about eleven youths from the community as being responsible for the mayhem, adding that the men of the zone 9 who stormed the community on December 10 arrested two of the accused persons and whisked them away to Umuahia.

But a major twist was brought into the matter few

days after, "when the notorious group converged and sent a petition to the Inspector General of Police, alleging that the traditional ruler was behind the killings in the community".

According to Nobu, the officials of the Force headquarters, who stormed the community in the early hours of the day, had waited till evening, before whisking the traditional ruler and some members of his cabinet away to Abuja.

The aggrieved community leaders said that the whole community is in disarray on account of the traditional ruler's continued detention, adding that there has been breakdown of law and order in the area.

"We are bothered by the fact that our traditional ruler, who ordinarily reported the matter to the Police in Umuahia is today being held in Abuja. He was arrested on December 18 last year alongside three

members of his cabinet. It is more disheartening that those who carried out the attack and arrest by Police officials from Umuahia have all been granted bail. Everything is in total chaos. The villagers are on the run as there is total breakdown of law and order. They are fleeing to neighbouring communities in Owo, Nike, Umuhaihi in Ebonyi State, Amagu and Obeagu," the petitioners wrote.

Nodu added that, efforts to get the attention of the Police authorities to grant bail to those arrested over the development in the community had proved abortive, adding that, they had written to the governor on the issue.

He urged President Yar'Adua to prevail on the Police to release the traditional ruler and conduct a thorough investigation into the disturbances at Ubahu, with a view to prosecuting those behind the incessant criminal activities in the area.

va  
rau

UBAHU RULERS  
COMMUNICATORS