

Youth protest killing of colleague

IRATE youths in Awka-Ekiti Community in Idemili South Local Government of Anambra State, last weekend took to the streets, protesting the killing of one of their colleagues, Mr. Obumneme Okonkwo, who was allegedly shot dead by members of community's vigilant group.

The youths numbering over 100, according to an eye-witness, went on rampage, blocking the town's major entrance, destroying houses and other property of members of the vigilant group who fled the town for fear of being lynched. The pandemonium which lasted for several hours also affected free flow of traffic.

According to the source, the youths who marched through the streets with matchetes and long axes, chanted war songs as they destroyed the houses of the members of the vigilant group.

The operatives of vigilante group had on Tuesday, February 17, this year shot and killed the suspected drugs dealer around 10.00am over a minor row.

The protesters said the vigilante operatives had no right to kill the victim because he was never an armed robber nor a trouble maker, wondering if Nigerian constitution vested

them with powers to execute criminals. The youths who operated under the aegis of Awka-Ekiti Youth Movement, said they were irked by the Town Union executive's plan to give the sum of N150, 000.00 to the bereaved family as compensation and funeral expenses which they alleged was a plan to stifle the case and let the perpetrators off the hook, noting that what they have just destroyed would be a child's play compared to what they would do if the town union executives of the town failed to ensure justice.

They said that they are not after the money as the youths can rally round to bury their own but are insisting that justice be done to forestall future occurrence.

At the Palace of the town's monarch, Igwe Joachim Ojukwu, where they had carried their protests to, the youths warned that the members of the vigilance group, especially one Mr. Anthony Muogbo who was alleged to have shot the victim, should proceed on exile for at least a period of 10 years, warning further that if he is seen anywhere in the community, they would ensure that he does not remain alive.

It took the spirited efforts of the monarch, Igwe Ojukwu to calm the frayed nerves of the youths. He urged the youths to remain calm

adding that he would ensure that justice is done in the matter.

When *Daily Champion* visited the town Union Secretariat, the President-General of the Union, Mr. Patrick Nwokeike said that they were looking into the case and called on the people of the community to be patient as he would surely get to the roots of the matter.

He acknowledged that the matter has been reported to the police who has commenced investigation.

At the country home of the 30-year-old victim, the mother, Mrs. Clara Okonkwo who spoke to newsmen amidst sorrow and anguish, said she had no premonition that tragedy was lurking at their doorstep on that ill-fated Tuesday.

She disclosed that not quite up to one hour after Obum left, she heard gunshots and wondered who was shooting at that peaceful time of the morning not knowing that it was the shots that killed her son.

According to her the annoying aspect was instead of the killers acknowledging their guilt they went to the Police Station and lied that they picked Obum by the road side after he was shot by unknown assailants.

Contacted, the Anambra State Commissioner of Police, Alhaji Mohammed Abbas said the matter has not been reported to his Command.