

Ebonyi community protests killing, arrest of kinsmen

KENNETH OFOMA, *Abakaliki*

MORE than 200 men and women of Okpuma village in Amangwu Edda autonomous community of Afikpo South local government area of Ebonyi State yesterday staged a peaceful protest at Government House Abakaliki as well as the State Police Command, Abakaliki over alleged killing of one of their kinsmen and arrest of three others by a joint military/police patrol at the weekend.

The protesters carrying several placards with different inscriptions including "Our Governor please help us", "Her Excellency come to our aid",

"Okpuma people are peace loving" and "Okpuma village is crying for help", also chanted songs depicting people that are wounded and bereaved.

A community leader and spokesperson for the people, Mr. Sunday Agbanu told journalists that members of the state military/police patrol team invaded their village and short indiscriminately, killing one person and arresting three others based on the invitation of Fulani herdsmen who mis-informed the security personnel that some Fulani herdsmen were being held by the villagers.

Agbanu said that after the killing and arrest of their

kinsmen, the joint patrol team took those arrested to the State Police Command, Abakaliki where they were dumped and labeled kidnappers.

He recounted that the matter started when Fulani herdsmen and their herds invaded their farmlands and streams destroying crops and polluting the only source of drinking water in the village.

According to the village head, the youths of the village mobilized and apprehended four of the herdsmen, and released two of them; one to look after the herds while the other one should go and invite the Alhaji who owns the herds to come and see the damage to their farmlands and stream.