

# C/River monarch dies in police custody

From Eyo Charles, Calabar

The traditional ruler of Buanchor community in Boki Local Government Area of Cross River State, Henry Okong, has died in police custody after one month in detention.

He was arrested on August 3 and interrogated over a mob attack on a woman accused of witchcraft at Okundi

village.

He was later transferred to the state police command headquarters in Calabar for further interrogation and kept in detention until his death on August 26. While in detention, he lost his 33-year-old son.

Circumstances surrounding the monarch's death remains unraveled as family sources said they were not allowed

access to him and that he was deprived of medical care.

His lawyer, Olivier Osang, said: "Three weeks ago, when the traditional ruler took ill, he pleaded with the police authorities and they took him to their clinic where he was referred to another hospital. The police authorities refused to grant him bail or take him to the prescribed hospital.

"The officer in

charge of the case SUPOL Victor Okonkwo said he could not have released the late chief in the absence of the police commissioner whom he said was away on Sallah holiday.

"As I speak to you, the body of the late traditional ruler is not yet released to his community. Nothing was found to suggest that he was culpable in the crime for which he was detained".