

# Police Kill Palm Wine Seller In Imo

FROM CHARLES  
OGUGBUAJA  
(OWERRI)

**A**NGUISH enveloped the sleepy village of Umuorisha in Ngor Opkala Local Government Area of Imo State yesterday as police allegedly shot dead a 68-year-old palm wine seller, Mr. Fimber Nkwocha Okere in the presence of his wife and seven children in their ancestral home. About five others had bullet injuries.

A renowned retired professor of Information Science from the City University New York, Uju Afolezi was among scores of indigenes of the village who were arrested by policemen.

They were allegedly taken to the Eagle squad of the command where they were detained for some hours before they were released on the orders of the Police Commissioner, Mr. John Moronike.

The body of the deceased, according to his elder brother, John,

has been deposited at the Federal Medical Centre (FMC), Owerri. The youths who sustained bullet injuries are currently in the intensive care unit of Uvuru General Hospital, for treatment.

According to a witness, a police team dispatched from a special squad of the command's headquarters stormed the village about 6 a. m. The team was acting on a petition said to have been signed by the monarch Eze Augustine Agupe of the communi-

ty, comprising four areas namely Eziala, U m u a g w u , Umuanyamele and Umuorisha,

In the petition co-signed by his aides, Agupe alleged that more than 50 persons were causing unconfirmed problems in the community.

*The Guardian* learnt that rather than investigate the report, the team stormed the area in the early hours, shot indiscriminately, killed Okere and arrested some people.

Sources told *The Guardian* that the Head of Rhema Mission, Aba, Rev. Chukwuemeka Ihuoma who had held liberation crusade successfully in the village made some allegations against highly placed individuals in the area, including the monarch who had been on the throne for about 28 years.

The source further stated that those concerned were uncomfortable with the allegation. They, therefore, petitioned Governor Achike

Udenwa, who in turn urged the police to step in.

The traditional ruler could not be reached when *The Guardian* visited his palace, but his wife, Rebecca said the problem was largely due to lack of security.

The religious leader disclosed that he had finished his crusade before the incident took place, and that he was invited into the village by the majority of the people and the permission of the police.