

Police Probe Death Of Palm Wine Tapper In Ngor-Okpala

By Ben Duru
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Imo State Commissioner of Police, John Morenike, has instituted a panel to investigate the killing of a palm-wine tapper at Umuorisha village in Ngor-Okpala Local Government Area of the state.

The investigation order by the police commissioner came to the fore following protests by notable members of the community that over-zealous policemen dispatched from the Eagle Squad of the command killed the man, Finbar Nkwocha Okere.

Daily Independent was told that the squad had been invited by the traditional ruler of the community, Eze Agube, because of revelations made by a cleric invited by the youths for a liberation programme.

Sources said the man of God from Rhema Chapel based in Aba, Abia State, Pastor Chukwuemeka Ihuoma, had been invited by the community following series of calamities and retard in growth of the people.

As part of the deliverance exercise, the pastor was said to have encouraged those still indulged in fetish worship to denounce their practice and embrace the proper mode of worship, as that remains the only potent way of liberating the community and her people from their present predicament.

In the course of the programme some of the leaders of the community were alleged to have confessed to some sharp practices and politely returned their fetish ornaments and other materials to embrace Christ, but this did not go down well with some others originally opposed to the exercise.

Our correspondent was further told that the traditional ruler had petitioned the Imo State Government that youths of the community were threatening to endanger the Sam Mbakwe Airport, a stone throw from his palace.

He insisted that if something was not done immediately to arrest the situation, there might be large-scale bloodshed, which would not speak well for the peace that presently exists in the state.

The government was said to have sent the letter to the office of the commissioner of police, who immediately dispatched a team of Eagle Squad with three buses load of mobile policemen.

Sources said that on arrival to the village about 4 a.m, the police proceeded to rounding up some of the 52 names allegedly masterminding the threat to the airport, including a former provost of the Alvan Ikoku College of Education, and forced them into the boot of their vehicle.

The sources continued that not satisfied with their operation, the policemen turned on the village and opened sporadic fire initially into the air and later on bystanders some of who rushed out of their bed because of the heavy shooting.

It was in the shooting at houses, we learnt, the deceased palm wine tapper was shot severally in front his house and he bled to death before he could be rushed to a nearby hospital for treatment.

When the death of the 68-year-old father of seven children hit the community, the policemen were said to have quickly withdrawn claiming that youths of the community had chased them with guns, and that it was in the cause of this that Okere was killed.