

Eight Killed In Ebonyi Over Witchcraft

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Eight indigenes of Onicha Community in Onicha Igboeze Local Government Area of Ebonyi State have been killed by their kinsmen for alleged witchcraft.

Assistant Inspector General (AIG) of Police, Zone 9, Adewole Ajakaiye, and the Commissioner of Police (CP), Ebonyi Command, Adanaya Gaya, weekend revealed this to newsmen at the commissioner's office in Abakaliki, the state capital.

The AIG explained that though no formal report had been made to the police, intelligence reports revealed that one of the victims was taken to a shrine in Delta State to confirm if he was a witch, before he was killed.

Ajakaiye posited that it could be out of fear that nobody in the community had reported the

matter to the police.

People of the community had on February protested what they called negligence of the area by the state government in terms of infrastructure development and selfishness of their kinsmen in government, and in the process vandalised 12 houses including that of the deputy governor, Prof. Chigozie Ogbu.

Two policemen allegedly kidnapped at the wake of the protest are still missing.

The AIG explained that about a fortnight ago, the Igboeze people undertook the second phase of the demonstration, razing the house of the deputy governor that was earlier vandalised.

He said the 22 persons arrested in connection with the acts had been arraigned.

Ajakaiye explained that the arrest of some of those who testified at the judicial panel of inquiry set up

by the state government was not out of place, hence the panel had not sat again.

Investigations by *Sunday Independent* revealed that the second phase of the attack of the deputy governor's house was fuelled by the arrest of those who testified at the panel, contrary to assurances by the panel that no volunteers at the panel would be arrested.

The AIG, however, said the arrest was not at the venue of the panel sitting, nonetheless pointing out that there was no immunity to arrest for anybody.

He said full unit of mobile policemen and the regular police had been stationed in the community and that the police would get to the root of what happened to their men.

The police boss explained that a missing person is not declared dead until after seven years, saying that officially the policemen are still alive, "but inside me, I feel they are gone".