

gunmen, who came in the

hicles used by the attackers.

soldiers, two civilians and two of the attackers.

as soldiers have assured us of safety," the chairman said.

## 3 How soldiers killed seven youths, by Tiv elders

SOME Tiv leaders in Gboko Local Government Area of Benue State relived yesterday how some soldiers, detailed to guard a company in Gboko, allegedly killed seven youths.

The leaders of Concerned Gboko Indigenes, led by the Local Government Deputy Chairman and the community's lawyer, Bem Nenge and Yandev Amaabai, said the youths were killed on March 18, when soldiers shot at them as they were protesting the shooting of their colleague, Terhile Jirbo, by a soldier.

Amaabai, who spoke while presenting a petition to the Executive Secretary of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), said Jirbo was shot in the mouth when he refused to eat his excrement, as allegedly directed by one of the soldiers.

He said the latest "unprovoked killing" was one in the series of atrocities perpetrated against the community and other Tiv communities by soldiers.

"This particular instance is pure dehumanisation. It all began when a young man, Terhile Jirbo, went to defecate in a bush around the company and one of the soldiers demanded he re-

### • Take case to Rights Commission

From Eric Ikhilae, Abuja

move his faeces with his mouth.

"The young man's inability to comply with this unlawful "order" infuriated the soldier, who shot him in the mouth with an AK 47 rifle.

"The victim is being treated at a private hospital in Gboko.

"It was after the injured man was taken to the hospital that aggrieved youths, who started protesting, were shot at by the soldiers.

"Seven defenceless, unarmed youths, including a young woman, were killed in their prime.

"The soldiers put the bodies under a tree and cordoned off the area; the company carried on with its

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business as if nothing happened.

"It was indeed another source of pain and anguish to parents and relatives when sponsored announcements in the media described the youths as

thieves.

"Even if they were thieves, one wonders if they were to be killed extra-judicially. Even the death of criminals is, at least, reported to their families and relatives.

"In our case, the company has remained nonchalant and aloof."

Members of the delegation are demanding N20billion from the Federal Government for the victims' families.

They urged NHRC to investigate the deployment of soldiers to protect private investment in peace time. They asked that the soldiers be withdrawn to prevent a recurrence.

NHRC's Executive Secretary Prof Bem Angwe assured that the commission will investigate the allegation and would ensure justice for the victims.