

Mysterious death of cleaner: Kinsmen seal NNPC office in Rivers

•Demand justice, release of deceased's body

From Rosemary Nwisi, Port Harcourt

INDIGENES of Akwa/Ibom State yesterday defied the heavy rains in Port Harcourt, the Rivers State capital, and its environs to demand justice for the somewhat mysterious death of their kinsman, Asher Dan.

Asher, 23, was working as a cleaner in the upstream and downstream section of the government office at the time the incident occurred on Tuesday, August 20.

He allegedly fell and died from yet to be ascertained floor of the eight storey NNPC office complex, which hosts several government parastatals.

It was alleged that in spite that the family, including his parents were not informed about the incident which befell their ward until about 4 pm, the police have denied them access to the body more than 78 hours after.

The protesters stormed the gates of the complex amidst heavy rains, chanting songs and displaying placards with various inscriptions that captured their shock and dissatisfactions in the "unclear circumstances in which Asher allegedly died and the blatant refusal of the deceased's relatives and statesmen from viewing the remains in the morgue.

The people blocked the entrance gates of the company with Asher's portrait and palm fronds, barred human and vehicular movements around the premises, demanded justice for the deceased and his poor family.

Some of the inscriptions on their placards include, 'we want explanation on Asher's death', 'who killed Asher?', "we demand justice for Asher", among others.

The protesters first marched to the gates of the state's police headquarters, which is some three poles away from the NNPC office, before turning over to barricade the scene of crime.

At the police headquarters, the family and some persons were invited to a meeting with some top police officers, and were informed that the matter had been transferred to the State Criminal Investigation and Intelligence Department (SCIID).