

# Father of Rivers top official dies in kidnappers' den

**N**onagenarian Chief Matthew Abu, the father of the Accountant-General of Rivers State, Mr. Ngozi Abu, is reported to have died on Friday while being held hostage in an unknown place.

Pa Abu was kidnapped from his home at Ihuma village on July 5, by unidentified gunmen, who kept him from his family until his corpse was found lying on the road early in the morning. Although it was not known how much might have been demanded as ransom to free him, our correspondent reported that the AG had refused to bow to pressure to pay the kidnappers.

His action might have been influenced by the decision of the state Governor, Mr. Rotimi Amaechi, not to pay ransom to criminal elements, who kidnap persons to force relations to part with huge sums of money.

Amaechi had directed his aides and security agents in the state to stop all forms of ransom payments and argued that kidnappers would be encouraged if people succumbed to their demands. A source said that Pa Abu, who had been ill when he was taken away, from his home, had pleaded

**Ibanga Isine, Port Harcourt** with his abductors to let him be.

He said, "It is wicked for anybody to think of abducting an old man but I think it is a curse for the man to die in captivity outside the comfort of his home. The old man, who was ill even before they took him away might have died in their hideout and they brought his corpse and dump on the road. His corpse was found in the early hours of today (Friday) and the police were alerted. It was taken away by the police and deposited in a mortuary somewhere along the East/West Road."

When contacted on the telephone, the Police Public Relations Officer in the Rivers State command, Mrs. Rita Inoma-Abbey confirmed the incident. She said that police officers found the remains of the AG's father on the road. Inoma-Abbey said the body had since been deposited in a mortuary.

She added that the police had informed his immediate family members of the sad development. She said, "It is very sad that anybody should have taken him hostage and allow him die the way he did."