

Protesting traders burn Abia vigilance office over N18,000 levy, member's shooting



• The burnt vehicle

Sunday Nwakanma, Umuahia

TRADERS at the Umuahia Modern Timber Market, on Monday, burnt down office of the Abia Vigilante Service in the market.

One Hilux van was also burnt down by the traders.

A source, who spoke to *PUNCH Metro*, said the incident was as a result of a disagreement between the traders and the Abia State Board of Internal Revenue, which imposed an

annual fee of N18,000 on the traders without prior information.

The source said that the board had on Sunday sealed off the entire market only for the traders to come on Monday to meet it under lock and key with a retinue of members of the AVS, who ordered them to close down their shops.

It was learnt that the traders refused to pay the fee, arguing that it was too much and the imposition was without prior notice.

"The Abia State Vigilante Service, popularly called Bakassi, came to the market to effect the order given by the revenue board, which resulted in a clash," the source said.

In an attempt to enter into the market to open their shops, a member of the vigilante shot one

of the traders, popularly known as Indomie, alongside five others.

The vigilante's action provoked the traders, who retaliated by burning the AVS office and its vehicle.

The injured traders were rushed to the Federal Medical Centre, Umuahia, where they were treated and discharged.

Confirming the incident, the

Police Public Relations Officer in the state, Geoffrey Ogbonna, said, "All the injured have been treated and discharged."

All attempts to get any official of the Abia BIR to comment on the incident proved abortive.

No life was lost during the incident as confirmed by a member of the AVS team. „

Seven suspected Internet fraud

Oluwatosin Omojuyigbe

SEVEN suspected Internet fraudsters have been arrested by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission in the Gwagwalada area of the

Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.

The suspects are Victor Chukwu, Abdulahi Mustapha, Promise Eze, Ozor Prince, Kolawole Bamsaye, Eze Daniel and Okona Chukwuemeka.