

Rivers youths protest over missing landlord found dead

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By Dennis Naku

Gunshots rocked the Woji area of Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State on Monday night as some protesting youths clashed with policemen over the discovery of the body of a missing landlord from the community in an uncompleted building.

The youths pelted stones and broken bottles at the police operatives, while they set fire on the streets to protest the death of the youth, a landlord identified as Nyebuchi Eke, whose body was recovered on Monday days after his disappearance in police custody.

He was said to have been in the custody of the Officer in Charge of Surveillance.

Our correspondent gathered that the tenant had alleged that his landlord (the deceased) threw some of his belongings outside following an argument and invited the police leading to the latter's arrest.

Rivers CP, Tunji Disu, appeared afterwards, as it took the intervention of the Woji Council of Chiefs to draw the attention of the police to the situation and demanded the police officer reveal the whereabouts of Nyebuchi who was last seen in his police van.

The officer and the tenant were taken into custody afterwards, but it did not douse the protest which began on Sunday as the youths went on the rampage demanding to know the whereabouts of the missing youth.

The youths blocked the road and damaged some shops in a fit of anger to express their grievances.

But on Monday, in the company with some chiefs in the area and Nyebuchi's family, the police recovered the landlord's body from an uncompleted building in Chokocho in Etche Local Government Area of the state far away from the police division that arrested him.

When the news filtered into the Woji community, it sparked a fresh protest especially as his body was found in a bad condition, as the youths blocked the road and reportedly clashed with the police.

An elder brother to the deceased and former Chairman of Obio/Akpor LGA, Solomon Eke, said his family wanted the police to take his brother's body to a government-approved mortuary for proper preservation.

Eke said, "The officer in charge of the investigation in the murder of my younger brother went on an assessment at the scene and then from there they recovered certain things.

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"They carried the suspect to what they said is a mortuary in Igbo-Etche, Etche LGA and saw the body with bruises all over.

"So, we are calling on the police to do the needful by taking the corpse to a government-recognised morgue for proper preservation and then continue the investigation."

He appealed to the youths not to take the law into their own hands despite their anger, saying, "The people who went there from the community and my family are not happy.

"When they came back, they were angry and started rampaging which I have warned that nobody should take the law into their own hands.

"Nobody should demonstrate and disrupt activities in the community. I'm not in support of that. I want a peaceful environment so that all hands will be on deck and the police will do their job.

"We the family are pained by what happened and we will not allow it to go like that."

When contacted, the police spokesperson, Grace Iringe-Koko, confirmed the incident, saying the Commissioner of Police, Olatunji Disu, had visited the deceased's family and commiserated with them.

Iringe-Koko, a Superintendent of Police, also said the suspect (tenant) and three policemen linked to the matter had been arrested and were under investigation.

She said, “Yes, I can confirm the incident and the CP led a management team to visit the scene and also condole with the family of the deceased.

“Meanwhile, the suspect and three policemen who allegedly perpetrated that act have been arrested. They have been transferred to the State Criminal Investigation and Intelligence Department. The matter is still ongoing as I speak with you.”