

# Kidnapped victim's body dumped in Imo river

From **GEORGE ONYEJIUWA, Owerri**

**T**he bullet-riddled body of Mr. Kel-echi Uchendu, a pharmacist, who was reportedly kidnapped few days ago, has been found floating on Okwuobia River, a tributary of the Imo River.

The Owerri-based pharmacist, who was suspected to have been dumped in the river by his

kidnappers, was abducted while returning from work by gunmen.

A close family source, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the kidnappers killed his brother and dumped his dead body in the river.

He said the kidnappers had earlier contacted the wife of the victim and demanded for ransom, adding that, "the family had pleaded with the kidnappers to spare his life

while we try to meet their demand but they went ahead and killed him and dumped him in the river."

The source said while efforts were being made to raise money for the ransom payment, the body of the pharmacist was discovered by villagers who went to fetch water from the river.

A police source, who did not want to be quoted, said the victim may have died from the gunshot in-

juries he sustained while struggling with his kidnappers.

"The police had advised the family to speak with the victim to ensure that he was still alive before negotiating or paying the ransom," he said.

The Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Joy Elemoko, who confirmed the incident, said the anti-kidnapping squad of the command was on the trail of the gunmen.