

Monarch distances self, Okonjo-Iweala, from murder allegation

From PAUL OSUYI, Asaba

The Obi of Ogwashi-Uku, Professor Chukwuka Okonjo has denied allegations that he was the mastermind of Friday's alleged attack on some youths in the community by soldiers that led to the death of one Prince Pentty Chukwu.

Prof. Okonjo, who is the father of the Coordinating Minister of the Economy and Minister of Finance, Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, also absolved his daughter of any complicity in the act that also led to two others sustaining bullet wounds.

Reacting to media report that his palace was behind the shooting by soldiers, Prof. Okonjo described the allegations as not only ridiculous but a calculated attempt at dragging the hard-earned image of the Okonjos into the mud.

According to a statement issued by the spokesman of the Obi of Ogwashi-Uku, Okolobi Lawrence, the minister was in far away New York at the time of the incident.

According to the statement entitled: *'The Real Facts about the Recent Violence in Ogwashi-Uku: A Statement by the Palace'*, the victims were allegedly among those that instigated violence and disrupted economic activities in the community on the said day before soldiers were invited to restore order.

"From information available to us from the State Secret Service (SSS) and the Police Force, this tiny section (Izedunor) attempted to disrupt the last Ihaaji traditional festival (Yam Roasting Festival).