

Police from Bayelsa State Command on the order suspected to be from the Bayelsa State Government. I'm being taken to SCID, led by one SP Ani."

## Edo: 3 pensioners die awaiting benefits

**AT** least three pensioners in Edo State have reportedly died while others are said to be languishing in penury and afflicted by different ailments following the non-payment of their pension and gratuities' arrears.

The pensioners, who served in various establishments in the 18 local government councils in the State, on Tuesday called on Governor Adams Oshiomhole to urgently, come to their rescue.

Their fresh protest, which came on the heels of a series of protests through some major roads and streets in Benin in August, took them to the House of Assembly, the Government House and the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) secretariat where they formally lodged their complaints.

They blocked the Airport Road causing, in the process, hours of vehicular traffic gridlock.

Spokesperson for the pensioners, Mr. Gabriel Osemwenkha, announced the death of at least three of his colleagues.

Osemwenkha alleged the failure of the state government to settle their pensions and gratuities arrears, which, according to him, run into millions of naira and cover several months.

He said the victims died due to ill health, worsened by lack of money to cater to their needs, especially domestic issues.

He urged Governor Oshiomhole to set up the state pensions board with a view to addressing some of the challenges of the pensioners.

He faulted the claim by Commissioner for Labour and Establishment, Didi Adodo, that the pensioners were being 'sponsored by somebody', saying: "This is far from the truth as we are retired and responsible gentlemen and women.

"As things are, no one can come out to tell us or compel us not to demand for our rights. We know it is our legitimate right; we are entitled to it; it is our own entitlement. Let him (Governor Oshiomhole) pay us; that is what we are appealing him to do for us.

"This is the fourth time we are coming here (secretariat of NUJ, Edo State) and we are appealing to well meaning Edo people to help us prevail on the governor to pay us our pension arrears and gratuities; the composition of pensioners here are local government pensioners and state pensioners in all fields of human endeavours."