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Church members stone man, 60, to death

— 12th October 2016

Ebonyi State Police Command has confirmed the murder of a man, Philip Ugwu, 60, by suspected worshippers following a land dispute in Afikpo Local Government Area. Public Relations Officer of the command, George Okafor said in Abakaliki that the incident occurred at Amebo-Ndebo village. Okafor said the matter was reported to the police on September 30 by the wife of the deceased, Abani Ugwu and added that one Tochukwu Okoh, an evangelist, has been arrested in connection

with the incident. He said the deceased's wife alleged that Okoh and three others attacked her husband with stones. The officer also quoted the widow as saying that her husband, who could not withstand the attack eventually became unconscious and was rushed to a hospital where he was confirmed dead. He said his body had been deposited in a mortuary and would undergo autopsy. The spokesperson said the divisional police officer for the area led a team of detectives and anti-crime patrol officers to the scene and arrested the suspect. "We are currently on the trail of other suspects and I am sure that they will soon be arrested due to the useful information at our disposal," he said. "We assure the public that the matter will be investigated thoroughly while the culprits will be duly prosecuted," he said. The victim, popularly called Boxer or Coach, was said to have argued with the worshippers in a new generation church over the erection of a fence to demarcate their lands. We heard Boxer's wife screaming that her husband had been attacked by some worshippers and before we could get to the scene, he was lying unconscious. "He was immediately rushed to the hospital, but his wife identified one of the attackers, still with a stone, who was immediately apprehended and handed over to the police." "The victim's wife explained that he had purchased and built on the parcel of land even before the church came to lay claim over it," a witness who preferred anonymity said. The witness said the matter had previously been reported to the traditional council, during which the head pastor of the church, still at large, was invited.

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