SARS operatives, Rivers community clash

From **Tony John**, Port Harcourt

THE alleged killing of a man by operatives of the Special Anti-Robbery Squard (SARS) in Rumuakwunde village, Emohua community in Emohua Local Government Area of Rivers State has sparked off tension in the area. Daily Sun gathered that the man from the Western part of the country (name withheld) but residing in Rumuakwunde was allegedly shot dead by the SARS operatives yesterday.

Residents of Rumuakwunde, who were angered by the killing, protested and carried the body to SARS office in the area to register their grievances. Reacting to the development, the Prince of Emohua Community, Chigozie Okor, confirmed that the incident caused tension. He added that youths, in collaboration with some Yoruba indigenes residing in the community, stormed the office of the SARS at Ogbakiri Junction along East-West Road to condemn the act.

Okor pointed out that the aggrieved youths and the Yoruba took the remains of the victim to block the entrance of the SARS office, leading to more shootings by the security operatives.

He said that the sporadic shooting caused gridlock on the busy East-West Road, forcing commuters to divert to alternative routes.

Okor, however, urged the youths and the Yoruba not to take laws into their hands, but allow the community to engage the security operatives in a dialogue to ensure that justice prevailed.

He further disclosed that the King of Emohua, Eze Vincent Okor, had already convened an emergency meeting of the chiefs, elders and traditional rulers to deliberate on the development.

As at press time, the Rivers State Police Command could not comment on the development. However, a senior SARS officer, noted that the operatives had gone to the village for an operation and were attacked by a cult gang.

The source, who did not want to be mentioned, further said that a group of suspected cultists in a meeting, on sighting the police van, opened fire. He added that the victim was gunned down when the police returned fire.