

time of going to press.

parents of the girls, they were drowned.

station.

assure you that the suspects will not go free."

## Commercial motorcyclists protest alleged ritual killers' den in Edo

From **Tony Osauro**, Benin

A ritualists' den has been reportedly discovered in a forest located between Ogheghe and Egbaen villages of Egor Local Government Area of Edo State. The forest is said to be filled with dead bodies and clothings belonging to children, women and men.

It was allegedly discovered after the body of a dead commercial motorcyclist was found in the forest. Consequently, commercial motorcyclists (Okada riders) operating

in Egor Local Government Area and youths have protested the presence of the den by setting up barricade on the road, even as it was gathered that other Okada riders operating in the locality were said to have been missing.

The protesting Okada riders were said to have identified a suspect, who hired their dead colleague two days earlier, when the suspect requested the services of another okada rider.

It was learnt that the okada riders followed the suspect and cornered him when he attempted to divert into the bush. The suspect was said to have been accosted by okada riders and

youths in the community who beat him up, forcing him to allegedly confess.

The suspect was said to have taken the enraged Okada riders to where he dumped the body of their dead colleague and named other accomplices, including a traditional birth attendant that used to buy the body parts.

The presence of policemen prevented the mob from carrying out jungle justice on the suspect, according to an eyewitness.

Another witness, Felix Okhuogha, said he had earlier rescued a man tied down inside the bush, adding that he

saw two fresh dead bodies, decomposing ones and human skeletons when he joined a search party in the bush.

Okhuogha said: "I was in my store one day when somebody came to tell me that he saw a man tied down in the bush. We went there and saw the man who I later discovered to be a brother to my co-landlord.

"I asked him what happened, he said a man tied him at gun point and took his motorcycle away. I brought him to the road and allowed him to explain to people.

"I saw dead bodies inside the

bush. It was terrible. The whole place was smelling. The police should do something about it."

An Okada rider, who did not want his name in print, said: "Our people are missing everyday. On Saturday, we entered the bush and found the body of a man that was missing four days ago. The man we caught has killed many people inside that bush", he alleged.

But in his reaction, Edo State Commissioner of Police, Babatunde Kokumo, said the suspect was arrested for alleged murder and not ritual killing.