

SORCERY

EBONYI COMMUNITY, 2 TRADITIONALISTS IN TANGO OVER DROWNED NATIVES

■ Villagers banish 2 suspects, families
■ We've no hand in deaths - **Accused**

From Wilson Okereke,
Afikpo

IT was a hot afternoon. Some angry youths took over Ndiabo-Ishiagu village, Ndiye Inyimagu Community in Izzi Local Government Area of Ebonyi State. They were armed with palm-fronds.

It was the afternoon of Saturday, January 30, 2021. Their mission was simple as they were directed to banish two men: Emmanuel Nwedu, 65, and Michael Nwewe Nwékuma, 55, from their homes with members of their respective families.

The duo were accused to have through their magical powers caused three natives of the community to be drowned in a river, an allegation the two men roundly denied.

A stakeholder in the area, Pius Nwibo told this reporter that the two men were accused of wizardry, saying that through their alleged spiritual powers they had caused the death of a certain Paul Igboji and two others.

According to him, Nwékuma and Sunday Nwiyeye, both natives of Oshopo village of the same community were caught while they were performing suspected dangerous sacrifice at "Ewe River" and shortly after the act; the three victims got drowned in separate occasions in the same water.

He listed the suspected members of the group to include: Michael Nwewe Nwékuma, John Nwogha Nwokoro, Nwamininshi Nwewe, Amaechi Nwedu and their native doctor, Sunday Nwiyeye.

Nwiyeye and his cohorts, he said, had in the time past been summoned and cautioned to desist from the suspected nefarious activity, but they (the accused persons) rather intensified their efforts and began to perform sacrifices at the river bank until Igboji and others died in the process.

Nwibo disclosed that the accused persons adjudged by the villagers to be guilty of the offence levelled against them were equally penalized in accordance with the town's tradition, but following their defiance, Nwékuma and the rest accomplice went and reported their ordeal to the Amegwu peace and conflict resolution committee, where the verdict was revoked.

Following the unpleasant antecedence of the suspected men, and the action of the



peace committee, the community became annoyed and ostracized the accused persons from their various homes.

The village head, Alex

Mgbogo, who also spoke to Sunday Sun, frowned at the alleged act of sorcery, pointing out that the accused persons had earlier flouted the order

of the village by refusing to make their activities public.

"Before now, the people had neglected the cabinet members and I; by refusing to open the room where their charms and other devilish items are kept", he alleged.

In their reaction, Nwedu and Nwékuma claimed that they were mere traditionalists who were carrying out some sacrifices in accordance with their belief. They also said that they had no hand in the death of anyone in the community either spiritually or otherwise.

It was further gathered that before their banishment, the accused persons had each paid fines of live goat and some drinks.

Victim's family debunks witchcraft

The family of Ogboji, one of the persons allegedly made to

drown through alleged magical powers debunked the narrative that the suspected sorcerers killed him.

Ogboji, aged 50 was married to two wives with 10 children. His younger brother, John Ogboji blamed bad road in the area for the deceased's death.

According to him, his brother had left home for a meeting hale and healthy, but unfortunately got drowned on his way back.

His lifeless body was found floating on the water two days later by a search party organised by the villagers.

"After we had waited throughout the sorrowful Sunday evening and could not see my brother, the following morning, we went to the venue of the meeting where we were told that all the people in attendance had gone shortly after the gathering.

"When I came back and began to contemplate over the next step to be taken, his children came and told me that their father's cap was found by the riverside and immediately, I intimidated our village head and other people who joined me in the search until the late Paul's corpse was found," he said.

The deceased's wives, Mrs Ijeoma, mother of six children and Mrs Nneka Ogboji, mother of four children, corroborated the information given by their brother-in-law, adding that the unfortunate incident had subjected them to untold hardship.

Ijeoma said that all she knew was that her husband got drowned and his remains were buried by the river bank, according to their tradition.

She added that she was not in a position to link his death to any form of supernatural powers from anywhere.

