

Police arrest suspected killers of DPO, deny burning houses

By Austin Ogwuda

ASABA—SUSPECTED killers of the Divisional Police Officer (DPO) attached to Ughelli police division, Mr. Nnamdi Ngwakor, a Superintendent of Police have been arrested, even as the Delta State police Commissioner, Mr. Udom Ekpoudom has denied media report that his men were responsible for the burning down of over 60 houses at Afiesere.

The CP told *Vanguard* in his office in Asaba yesterday

that "three other suspects were arrested yesterday (Sunday), thus bringing the number of arrested suspects in connection with the incident to 27 and they have confessed", he stated.

He said "my men are not mad people, not criminals like those that killed my DPO. We did not torch any house. Even among the Afiesere people some of them were not happy that the DPO and my Inspector who were out to protect their lives were killed in the process.

"Most of the houses", he

went on, "stored petrol because of the NUPENGASSAN strike and during the fight, most of the houses because if they burn one it led to another because of fuel, not by my men", he insisted.

Meanwhile, as at the time of filing in this report, the State Security Council Meeting was in session solely to deliberate on the Afiesere crisis. Among persons attending the meeting behind closed doors at the office of the state deputy governor, Chief Benjamin Elue who was presiding were the state police commissioner, the Director of State Security Service (SSS), Secretary to the State Government (SSG), representative of Ovie of Ughelli, Chairman of Afiesere community, Chairman of Ughelli North local government area, among others.

Earlier while addressing a press conference in Asaba on Friday, the CP gave a vivid account of how the DPO was cut down.

Said he: "The Area Commander of Ughelli got information that there was to be fracas, people trying to fight, two communities known as Afiesere and Ekiugbo. Two days earlier some men from Ekiugbo were alleged to have beaten up a man from Afiesere, a case of assault and because of that the youths of Afiesere went to retaliate. What they did was not even going to beat up the Ekiugbo people, they commandeered very many vehicles including vehicles belonging to Oceanic Bank, blocked everywhere.

"Because of this", he went on, "the Area Commander asked the two DPOs near him, the DPO 'A' Division and 'B' Division Ughelli to send in reinforcement to help him quell the riot and the DPO 'A' Division decided to go to Area Commander office with his men with the reinforcement and on the way they were ambushed, the DPO, one Inspector were killed on the spot and their arms taken away from them".

• Police burnt 66 houses in Afiesere —LG BOSS

By Emma Amaize

rested several others in a clearly vendetta mission.

Akpovoka who spoke to newsmen alleged that the vendetta was ordered by the hierarchy of the police in the state.

In his words: "It is not an allegation, he (names withheld) ordered his men to go and burn down Afiesere community because there was a fracas between the "garage boys" and the Divisional Police in Agbarha and the DPO died".

He posited that the police were cooking up the story of an alleged crisis between Afiesere and Ekiugbo, adding: "We in Afiesere community don't have any problem with Ekiugbo people. We are brothers and inter-marry, so, there is no problem between Afiesere community and Ekiugbo community. It is only the "garage boys" that has problem with the police."

He appealed to the Delta State Government to set up a panel of inquiry to investigate the matter, stressing that the police that was supposed to maintain peace, law and order have turned themselves into those terrorizing the people.

WARRI—DEPUTY Chairman of Ughelli North Local Government Council in Delta State, Mr. Julius Akpovoka says that about 10 persons have been killed and over 3,500 villagers sacked from their homes by policemen who also burnt over 66 houses at Afiesere community over the killing of a Divisional Police Officer and an Inspector of Police.

Mr. Akpovoka who hails from the area said that the people did not know anything about the death of the policemen, as the incident that led to the death was between garage boys and men of the Agbarha Police Division.

He therefore called on the state government to set up a panel of inquiry to investigate the incident and call the police to order. He said that it was shocking the police who were supposed to maintain law and order burnt down over 66 houses of people who were not involved in the said act and even went ahead to shoot an Okadaman and ar-