

Ebonyi: Police confirm 2 cops killed, 5 abducted

By Tony Edike

ENUGU—THE Ebonyi State Police Command confirmed yesterday that at least five police men were abducted and taken hostage during the recent civil strife in Onicha Igboeze, Onicha local government area of the state.

The law enforcement agents had clashed with youths from the Onicha Igboeze community last weekend, when they (police) tried to disperse the youths who were protestesting what they called the state government's neglect of the area in the provision of social amenities.

Mr. Adenaya Gaya, the state police commissioner, while briefing reporters in Abakaliki, said four persons, including two policemen were killed in the clash while one civilian was found dead in a private clinic in the community on account of the incident.

Gaya confirmed that some of the abducted officers had been released but said the command was still engaged in a serious dialogue with the people for the release of the remaining officers. He, however, disclosed that the

youths had assured him of the safety of the abducted officers.

The CP added that the command was still investigating the remote and immediate cause of the mayhem as well as the circumstances that led to the death of the civilian saying, "he was found with machete cuts on his back and head, a mortal wound that could not have been inflicted by the police, who carry guns and not machettes".

He further confirmed that some people had been arrested in connection with the bloody incident but refused to give the number of those arrested as he said that investigations into the matter was in progress.

It would be recalled that the demonstration by villagers from Onicha community last weekend later became bloody when the police in a bid to stop them allegedly opened fire on them killing two instantly. The action of the police, however, provoked the villagers who resorted to destruction of property of some government officials believed to have invited the police while some policemen were also abducted in the confusion.