

Man electrocuted, as bulldozers pull down illegal structures in PH

By George Onah

PORT HARCOURT—AN artisan was electrocuted in Port Harcourt, yesterday, when bulldozers of the Rivers State Environmental Sanitation Authority, rumbled through illegal structures along Emenike Street and part of Ikwerre Road, pulling down scores of stores and wares.

The man, an electric welder, simply identified as Dede, apparently forgot that the machine was still connected to electricity, when he attempted to pull the entire work tool off its base, to avoid the approaching bulldozer.

But he was knocked off his feet and thrown violently to the ground, just as the menacing vehicle crumbled roofs, upturned containers made into apartments, as well as crushed into heaps, metals

assembled for panel works.

Fellow traders, hurried to his aid, dragging him off the "life wire", attempted a first aid on him after which he was carried into a wheelbarrow in an unconscious state to a nearby clinic. It was not clear at press time whether he survived the shock.

Director in the Authority, Mr. Napoleon Ewule, who led the team, told *Vanguard* that the structures were obstructing academic activities in the St. Andrew's Church Nursery and Primary Schools, behind the fence where the structures had been constructed.

In addition, the traders' shanties, he said, were environmental hazards, "not just to the school but residents of the environs", because the gutters have been blocked and the dirt they produce are not properly disposed off.