

Police kill PDP chief in Delta

●He is an armed robber —POLICE

By Emma Amaize

WARRI—A LEADER of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in Delta State and chairman of the Community Development Committee (CDC) of the Kokori community, Mr. Benjamin Ojijevwe, has been killed under questionable circumstances in Warri by policemen attached to the Eagle Eye Squad, a special anti-robbery squad of the Delta State Police Command.

The suspicious killing of Ojijevwe who was also the head of the community vigilance corps generated tension, weekend, in the community. He was arrested in Kokori town, last month, by the police on allegation of robbery and was whisked away to Warri along with four others after three guns belonging to the vigilance group and other items were found in his house.

Delta State Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Mr. Banawi Ishaku, confirmed the death of Ojijevwe when contacted by *Vanguard*, weekend, but said the politician made useful confessions to the police in the course of investigations into his robbery escapades, escaped from the ve-

hicle in which he was being taken to the hideout of his gang by the police, and was shot in the process. He added that the corpse had been deposited in the mortuary.

Vanguard called the Commissioner of Police severally and sent text messages to his cell phone at the weekend but he did not respond. The head of the anti-robbery squad who picked his call said he was not authorized to speak to the press.

Independent investigation by *Vanguard*, however, showed that there was more to it than meet the eyes in the killing of the politician. Already, the state Commissioner of Police, Mr. Hezekiah Dimka, said to be incensed by the development, had, purportedly, summoned the members of the squad to Asaba to explain their role in the matter.

"A discreet investigation is going on over the killing of the CDC chairman. The Commissioner is not happy with the development, which is the only thing I can tell you now", a police officer confided to *Vanguard*, yesterday.

We gathered that there was a delicate power play between the late CDC chairman and an influ-

ential leader, a chief in the town, who is the boss of a construction company over the leadership of the community and money accruing from oil royalties to the town.

The late Ojijevwe who took over from a loyalist of the said *de facto* leader discovered an unconfirmed fraud of about N36 million involving the oil money paid to the community, and insisted he should account for the money. The matter generated a heated row in the community, as the deceased refused all entreaties to forget the matter.

Vanguard learnt that the leader of the opposing faction threatened to deal with him, and few days after, the anti-robbery squad was told that he was an armed robber. The squad stormed the community, last month, and met Ojijevwe while he was holding a meeting with members of his executive. He was told the purpose of the visit and that they would want to search his house. He reportedly told them that he had three licensed guns in his house, belonging to the community's vigilance corps, which he was the chairman and where they were kept in his house.