

# 4 die in Imo erosion disaster

By Chidi Nkwopara

**O** WERRI—FOUR people, including three children and an adult, have been confirmed dead, while property, cash crops and economic trees conservatively valued at over N2.6 billion have been washed away by erosion at Urualla, Ideato local government area of Imo State.

The President General (PG), Urualla Progressive Union (UPU), Chief Hyginus Ekwueme Onwuneme, who confirmed the ugly incident to *Vanguard*, also raised alarm that more ancestral homes have been threatened since the current rainy season.

“Three children and an adult have been confirmed dead since the erosion started devastating the town. The community is presently threatened by gully erosion from different sectors”, Chief Onwuneme lamented.

While noting with grief that “several ancestral homes have been swallowed by the erosion”, Chief Onwuneme also lamented that many families have abandoned their

homes and taken refuge in distant places.

Some of the families already sacked by the erosion include those of Pius Uzoechi and Innocent Egemka, both of Umuomeji, Umuturu, as well as Bede Nwaopigbo and Okwute Omechuruagu of Ozuome, Ugwunani, all in Urualla.

“The torrential rain of the past four days has not only

worsened the situation but has further increased the threat to life and property of the people. More farmlands, crops and economic trees have caved in and more would go before the rains subside”, Onwuneme lamented.

It was his considered opinion that more than 35,000 natives have fled from their ancestral homes, while those living outside the town no

longer fancy coming back home for fear of the environmental disaster.

Answering a question, the PG-UPU affirmed that their kith and kin in Umuogu and Eluama in the Northern fringes of the town, have been cut off by the ravaging erosion, adding that more damage would be done if nothing was done immediately to check landslide.

## Two illegal petrol merchants arrested

By Chidi Nkwopara

**O** NITSHA—TWO persons suspected to be dealers in illegal petroleum products have been arrested in Onitsha by the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC).

Commandant of the corps in Anambra State, Mr David Bille while speaking to newsmen yesterday said the suspects were arrested on Saturday and

Sunday at Ose River bank and Upper Iweka in Onitsha respectively.

He said the patrol team of the corps were on surveillance at the river bank when a boat anchored at one end of the river.

Bille said that few minutes later, a Mitsubishi truck conveying 12 drums of suspected petroleum products were intercepted by his men but the driver and the occupants of the vehicles escaped into thin air.

He said the second vehicle, a Datsun pick up with registration number XD109ENU and the driver, Peter Otobo {35} from Uzo Uwani, Enugu state, were arrested at Bida road Onitsha conveying five drums of the suspected petroleum product.

Another three drums of the products conveyed in a barrow with registration number 1129ON was also confiscated by the patrol team who could not arrest the owner.