

SOUTH EAST VOICE

Youths protest over mysterious deaths in Imo

By CHINONSO ALOZIE

OWERRI—Youths from Umuezeala Ije, Ochii Ogwa Community, Mbaitoli Local Government Area of Imo State have protested against a dead woman who they alleged was responsible for the untimely death of youngsters in the area.

The youths said that the ghost of late Mrs. Latricha Mbataku Ononuju whose body had been at a hospital mortuary in Owerri, the state capital for over 10 years was responsible for the untimely death of some of them in the area.

The youths spoke in an interview with *South East Voice* while protesting at the Imo State police headquarters, Owerri.

The leader of the youths, Ernest Nnanna said that they were at the police headquarters to demand for the release of some of them who were detained in connection with the

Some of the placards carried by the youths read: "Police we need your intervention; "26 lives lost because of witchcraft operation," "Ononuju must be buried to stop ritual killings," "Stop the witchcraft," "Stop ritual deaths now," "Bury this woman for families to have peace and progress."

Nnanna alleged that some relations of late Ononuju, had always treated the matter with levity whenever it was to be discussed in the community, adding that no fewer than 26 of them (youths) had died as a result of the spiritual attacks by the deceased, whose ghost had been hovering around.

The youths further told *South East Voice* that the late woman had severally appeared in their dreams to issue warnings to the villagers that she (Latricha)

wanted her remains to be buried in order to have rest, adding that failure to do so would lead to more ugly things happening in the village.

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names of some people who allegedly died as a result of the unfortunate development as Mrs. Maria Nnanna, Mrs. Cetrin Ononuju, Mr. Lurcy Ononuju, Miss Adaze Nnanna, Mr. Emeka Ononuju, Mr. Chinaedu Ononuju, Mr. Okechukwu Ononuju, among others.

Responding to the youths, the Police Public Relations Officer, PPRO, Andrew Enwerem, said that the issue was purely a traditional matter, adding however, the state Commissioner of Police, Austin Evbakhavbokun, who was unhappy over the sad development, had directed the elders of the affected village to commence the processes for the burial ceremony to ensure peace in the area.



•Protesting youths over mysterious deaths of young people in their village, allegedly owing to delay in the burial of a woman, who died over 10 years ago.