

Confusion as police kill suspected criminal in Delta

...It's extra judicial killing, human rights activist alleges

By Festus Ahon

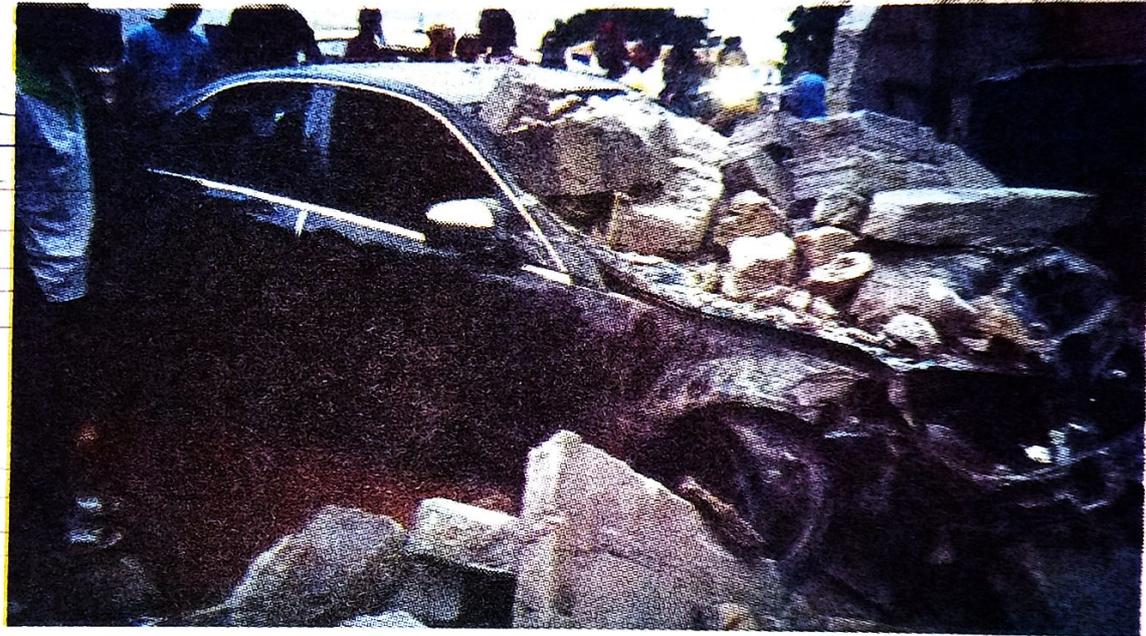
RESIDENTS of District Labour Agency, DLA area of Asaba, the Delta State capital, were yesterday, thrown into confusion as a middle-aged man was allegedly shot dead by police officers.

Vanguard gathered that the police officers were chasing the Mercedes Benz car with five occupants including the deceased, after suspecting the occupants to be criminals.

A source who spoke to newsmen, said the officers shot at the tyre of the vehicle to demobilise it, consequently, the car veered off the road to a halt.

The source who pleaded anonymity, said the vehicle rammed into a fence and the bricks collapsed on its bonnet and windscreen, adding that the vehicle screeched to a halt.

The source who spoke further, said three of the occupants came out and took to their heels, while the other two came out to surrender to the police. The source alleged that the police shot one of them at close range before arresting the second



•Wreckage of the car

one.

The deceased was not armed when he was reportedly shot dead, the source said, adding that nothing incriminating was found on the lifeless body of the deceased when searched.

In a reaction, the acting Public Relations Officer of Delta State Police Command, DSP Bright Edefe alleged that the occupants of the vehicle were suspects, adding that "they had just operated in another part of the town.

"We had an intelligent report that they had just finished operation and

were moving towards DLA road. So our men mounted surveillance, and when the officers saw the car, they flagged it down but they refused to stop.

"As such, our men chased them to the point where their vehicle hit the fence. They opened fire on the officers who responded, and in the process, three of them escaped while one was shot. One suspect was arrested while a locally-made gun was recovered."

Meanwhile, a human rights activist, Mr. Victor Ojei of Young Nigerian

Rights Organization, described the incident as another case of extra-judicial killing, calling for proper investigation.

Ojei said: "This action must be investigated. This is an extra judicial killing of a very young boy who has a bright future. We have the Administration of Criminal Justice Act to protect the criminals or the accused.

"We as Nigeria citizens have a right to life, nobody has the right to take anybody's life. These policemen need to be investigated."