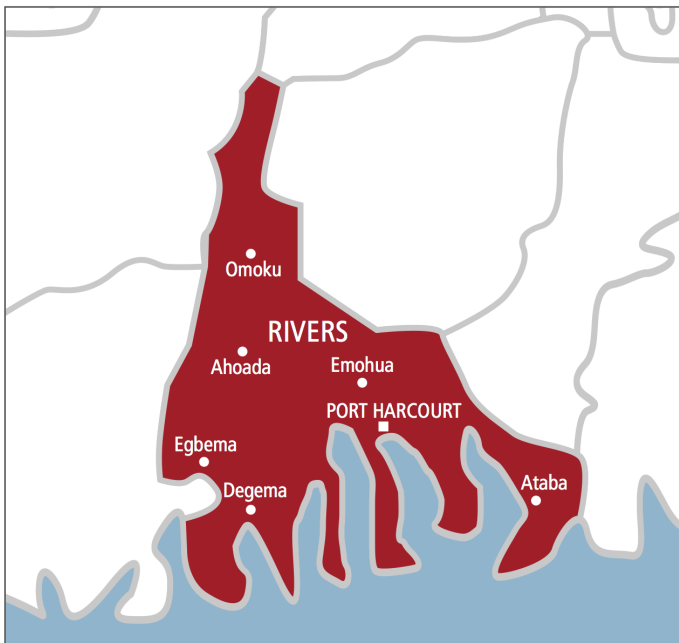


4 Traders Killed In Anti- Northerners' Protest In Rivers



By **Bassey Willie**

Wed, 18 Feb 2026 5:33:34 WAT

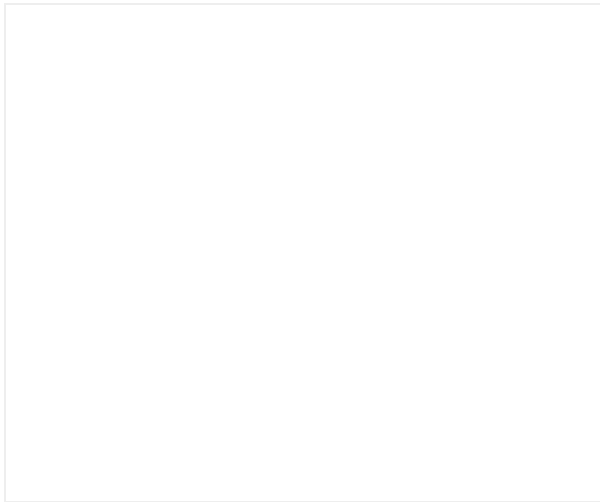


The Hausa community in Rivers State has said that four of its members were killed during last weekend's protest targeting northerners at the Oil Mill Market in Rumuokwurusi area of Port Harcourt.

Chairman of the Hausa Community in Rivers State, Mr. Musa Saidu, disclosed this on Tuesday when he led other northern leaders to the market to assess the situation.



He stated that several shops belonging to northern traders were looted and vandalised during the unrest.



Speaking with Daily Trust, Saidu urged northern residents and traders in the state to remain calm and peaceful despite the tensions.

He said northerners, like other Nigerians residing in Rivers State, are law-abiding citizens engaged in legitimate businesses.

“About four northern traders were killed during the protest at Oil Mill Market. I visited the area today with some journalists. We went round the shops of those affected and saw that many had been looted,” he said.

The protest followed the killing of an indigene, Nchelem Samuel Festus, allegedly by a northern commercial motorcyclist in Igwuruta, Ikwerre Local Government Area.



Festus was accused of stealing a motorcycle from a shop owned by northerners. During an attempt to retrieve the motorcycle, an argument reportedly ensued, leading to the motorcyclist allegedly stabbing Festus. He later died from injuries sustained in the incident.

The February 10 incident sparked protests, with demonstrators accusing northern commercial motorcycle operators of being responsible for Festus' death and alleging their involvement in other crimes, including rape and kidnapping.

Protesters blocked the Port Harcourt International Airport Road, demanding an

immediate ban on commercial motorcycle operations by northern riders.

Tensions further escalated on Saturday when a wheelbarrow pusher, identified as Zakara Afaaruwu, allegedly stabbed a trader from Benue State, Hightor Wenem, to death during a dispute over space at the Oil Mill Market.

The incident triggered renewed attacks on northern traders, with several businesses reportedly vandalised and looted.



The police confirmed the arrest of Afaaruwu and stated that he is in custody for investigation and possible prosecution.

Reacting to claims that four northern traders were killed, the Police Public Relations Officer in Rivers State, CSP Grace Iringe-Koko, said she was unaware of such fatalities.

“I’m not aware of any killing. I have already stated what happened during the protest,” she said.

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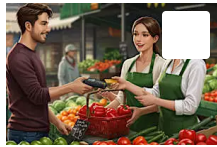
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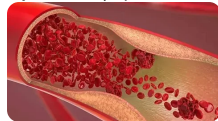
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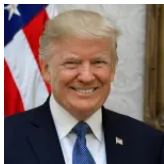
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