

Gunmen kill traditional ruler, five others in Imo community

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Six individuals, including the traditional ruler of the Ochia Autonomous Community in the Ohaji/Egbema Council Area of Imo State, His Royal Highness Eze Paulinus Ekwueme, have been killed and burned to ashes by unidentified gunmen.

Also murdered in cold blood on Friday were two brothers of the slain traditional ruler, his driver, and his security guards.

According to information circulating from an online video, the six individuals killed were immediately incinerated in the community alongside the traditional ruler's official vehicle.

Eze Ekwueme, who had been away from his community for several years due to health challenges, had just returned to attend a meeting with the women of the community. After the meeting held on Friday, the unidentified gunmen reportedly targeted him and fatally shot him along with those who were accompanying him.

Commissioner of Police confirmed the incident, Imo State Command, CP Audu Garba Bosso, who stated that tactical units with available operational resources have been deployed to hunt down the assailants responsible for this heinous attack on the traditional ruler of the Ochia Autonomous Community along Asa in Ohaji/Egbema LGA.

In a statement issued on Saturday by the Public Relations Officer of the Imo State Police Command, DSP Okoye Henry, it was noted that the deployment of security personnel followed a distress report received from Ohaji Division on April 10, 2026, at approximately 4:30 PM. The report indicated that armed assailants had attacked the traditional ruler along Asa Awara Road.

Upon receiving the report, the Commissioner of Police promptly mobilised and dispatched tactical teams to the scene in Assa, where officers recovered the burnt remains of the deceased.

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He said that the remains have been evacuated and deposited at the Federal University Teaching Hospital (FUTH), Owerri, for preservation and autopsy.

The PPRO said that the Command has commenced a comprehensive investigation into the incident, while intensive operations are ongoing to apprehend the fleeing suspects and recover any weapons in their possession.

He said adequate security measures have also been emplaced to forestall any future occurrence of such a tragic incident in the area and its environs.

Additionally, the Commissioner of Police and his Management Team have embarked on an on-the-spot assessment and confidence-building visit to the Ochia community to reassure residents of the Command's resolve to restore calm and enhance sustained security presence in the affected area.

While extending condolences to the family of the late traditional ruler and other deceased victims, the CP assures Imolites that the Command remains fully committed to sustaining peace and security in the State, and that in no distant time, the perpetrators will be arrested and made to face the full wrath of the law.