

Gunmen kill 5, burn church, vehicles, others in Anambra

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- **Police vow to nab perpetrators, say cultists behind attacks**

From **Obinna Odogwu**, Awka

There's palpable fear in Anambra State following deadly attacks by gunmen on Nawfia and Lilu communities in Njikoka and Ihiala Local Government Areas (LGA) of the state.

In Nawfia community, four people were murdered in cold blood, on Sunday evening, at the Afor Market area, while one person was killed in Lilu, when gunmen invaded a church in the community the same day in the morning.

It was not clear if church service was in session when the gunmen, who have been terrorising the community and others in Ihiala LGA, stormed the area, but they reportedly opened fire on the church premises, killing one person who's yet to be identified and injuring several others.

They also set fire on the church building, the pastor's house, his car, and one other vehicle reportedly being used by the security operatives guarding the area.

These sad developments have been confirmed by the police in the state who, also, revealed that efforts were being made to track down and arrest the perpetrators of the dastardly act.

Spokesperson of the police in the state, SP Tochukwu Ikenga, in a statement, said that the Nawfia tragedy was carried out by suspected cultists.

“The Anambra State Police Command wishes to provide a comprehensive update on the cult-related attack that occurred on the evening of December 7, 2025, at Afor Nawfia Market, along the Onitsha–Awka Old Road.

“It will be recalled that operatives of the Command attached to the Special Anti-Cult Squad, Enugwu-Ukwu, had, four days earlier, acting on credible intelligence about a planned rival cult confrontation, arrested two dangerous suspects and recovered a firearm from them.

“The arrested suspects have been assisting the Police with valuable information aimed at preventing further cult-related violence within Awka and its environs.

“Despite these proactive efforts by the Command operatives, some members of the same gang, on the evening of December 7, 2025, operating in a black Lexus SUV with registration number yet unknown, stormed Afor Nawfia Market and opened fire indiscriminately. The violent attack resulted in the fatal injury of four persons, after which the assailants fled the scene.

“Although the hoodlums escaped before police arrival, preliminary information obtained at the scene has provided useful leads, and the Command is already acting on them to ensure the perpetrators are tracked down and arrested.

“The Anambra State Police Command remains resolute in its determination to rid the state of cultism, violent crime, and all forms of criminality. Further developments will be communicated as investigations progress”, the statement concluded.

On the Lilu church attack, the command assured that the gunmen behind the tragedy will be arrested and brought to justice. It said that the Commissioner of Police, Ikioye Orutugu, has condemned the attack carried out by armed criminals, on Sunday morning, December 7, which left one person dead and a few others seriously injured.

“The CP states that this heinous and abominable act, committed against innocent worshippers, is not only an assault on the community, but a grave affront to our shared values of peace, sanctity of life, and freedom of worship.

“The Command extends its deepest sympathies to the families of the victims and to the entire Lilu community, and assures the public that the police shall relentlessly hunt down the perpetrators of this crime.

“The CP notes that no community should be subjected to such brutality as the command will not allow criminals to instill fear or destabilise the peace we are working tirelessly to maintain.

“In view of the above, the Command has already intensified intelligence-driven operations, deployed the Joint Security Team, and strengthened surveillance across the area. The operatives are following every lead as no resource will be spared in ensuring that those responsible are apprehended and made to face the full weight of the law.

“The Command urges residents to remain calm and cooperate with the joint security team by providing useful information that can assist ongoing investigations for justice to be served.

“The Command remains steadfast in its commitment to protecting life and property across Ihiala and the entire state”, the statement concluded.