

Gunmen Storm Conference Venue, Kill 2, Injured Others

At about 1.45pm, on Monday, November 20, 2006, a group of Youngmen fully armed with AK47s, Pistols and dynamite invaded one of the Offices of the Academic Associates Peace Works (AAPW) in the Government Reserve Area, Port Harcourt, the Capital of Rivers State and shot dead Mr. Wariboko Ngeribara (a.k.a. "Yellowman"), a father of one and Mr. Bertram Ogbonna, an ex-banker and a final year student of Law at the Rivers State University of Science and Technology (RSUST), Nkpolu, Port Harcourt.

Eyewitnesses told CEHRD investigator that when the gunmen who numbered six arrived AAPW's Office on motorcycles, popularly called Okada in Nigeria, where a forum was going on, they gained access into the conference hall of the non-governmental organization and shot the above victims. While, the operation of the armed group lasted, a major access road to the office was blocked by them. They were said to have detonated dynamite in the sprawling compound of the AAPW before carrying out their operators.

Ngeribara, was a member of the Iclander a cult group (gang) responsible for a lot of violence around the Rivers enclave. He was, in the Iclander terminology, a German, meaning a Senior Officer.

The late Wariboko Ngeriabara, popularly called Yellowman was said to have defected from the Iclander and joined The Outlaws, a splinter group of the Iclander. The Outlaws is led by Soboma George, Tom Ateke's estranged second-in-command. The Iclander and The Outlaws are always engaged in gun battles for supremacy and territory control.

The case of Bertram Ogbonna was the most tragic; his case was that of mistaken identity or accidental death. He was not a member of any cult or gang. According to a press release issued by AAPW in the wake of the cult violence "...Ogbonna was not a member of any cult and was simply working with AAPW on nonviolent elections. He was a family man and a law student".

Other injuries sustained during the attack include the broken leg of AAPW's Godwin Egbulefi, a bullet wound to the leg of volunteer prince Zuweigha Andabai, and a blow to the face of AAPW's Wesley Okpara (aka Smokey), all of whom are recuperating from their wounds".

During the attack, Yellowman died instantly while, Ogbonna died later of bullet injuries at the trauma unit of Tema Hospital in Port Harcourt run by medicines San Frontiers (MSF), an International Humanitarian Medical organization.

AAPW, which has been working on peace options in Nigeria, was trying to rehabilitate some members of the cult group or gangs.

AAPW further stated in their release "It is important to emphasize that the attack occurred as 18 members of the joint Niger Delta Leaders forum, were making final preparations for a voter education/nonviolence rally which was scheduled to take place in Port Harcourt today. We have embarked upon a Niger Delta Wide Campaign for nonviolent and fair elections in 2007, which include rallies; voter and Civil education; promotion of issue based campaign; election conflict monitoring and response; establishment of Nonviolent Election Committees in 20 of the most conflict - prone Local Governments in Bayelsa, Delta and Rivers States to monitor both elections and Performance of election Officials".