

7 killed in Awka cult clash

ODOGWU EMEKA ODOGWU

It was a bloody weekend in Awka, Anambra State capital, as seven persons believed to be students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University (NAU), Awka, including a Youth corp member, were killed during a cult clash.

Following the killings, a heavy police presence was felt in Awka and environs.

The Dean Students Affairs of the university, Professor Emeka Ezeonu, confirmed the killing to *Daily Champion*. He said seven corpses have been evacuated by the Nigerian Police from various spots in Awka.

Prof. Ezeonu said: "I woke up to receive the report that our students were shot at various spots in Awka but I am yet to be fully briefed to be able to know those who are our students and those who are not, but I want to remind you that campus cultism is no longer here but these artisans are now the cultists.

"Part of the problem is that the artisans are cultists because two weeks ago, they seized one of the routes where our buses ply through Ifite, insisting that they would be controlling the axis now and it created serious crisis before it was resolved."

He said it was still hazy to determine whether the victims were all students of the institution as one of them was said to have the identity card of Ebonyi State University *Daily Champion* gathered that the killings were at various spots in Awka including High Tension area near Aroma, Okpuino area and Ring Road among others. But the Anambra State police command which also confirmed the incident, said it was a cult clash between the *Vikings* and the *Black Axe* groups.

The Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Assistant Superintendent of Police ASP Fidelis Agbo, said no arrest had been made as investigations continue, vowing that police would unravel those

behind the killings. Reacting on the involvement of a corps member, the state coordinator of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC), Reverend Temitope Ajayi, admitted that a corps member was killed at a viewing center.

Reverend Ajayi said the corps member was from Anambra and was serving at Kebbi State. The incident came barely two days after campus cultists alleged to be members of *Black Axe* shot and seriously wounded the leader of the *Vikings*.

Daily Champion could not confirm if weekend's incident was reaction to Thursday's attack, as the attackers were yet to be identified as at press time.

The corp members murder was very painful tension and grieve took over the town when two young men walked into a television viewing centre at Amaenyi, a village in Awka and shot dead a young man said to be a serving member of the National Youth Service Corps.