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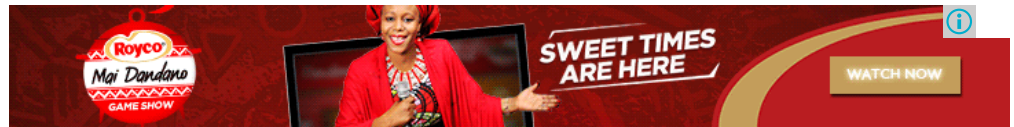


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Rival cult groups strike again in Imo, kill 2

By Johnkennedy Uzoma, Owerri | Publish Date: May 23 2016 5:00AM

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A fresh war between rival cult groups that erupted in the oil producing Ochia and Awara autonomous communities of Ohaji/Egbema LGA in Imo State has claimed the lives of two persons.

The two town hall buildings belonging to the communities and several others, including a soldiers' camp in Awara community, have been raised while the villagers have deserted their homes for fear of attack by the cultists.



The palace of the traditional ruler of Ochia Community, Eze Ekwueme Ekwueme, was equally pulled down while the Catholic priest in charge of St. Joseph Catholic Church who was appointed to head the peace

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reconciliation committee, ran away for his dear life.

Daily Trust gathered that lack of maintenance of security outfits and peace operation led to the pulling out of the area by soldiers on 15th May 2016, a situation which encouraged the return of the rival cult groups.

A citizen of Aawara community, Mr. Saturday Ochia, told Daily Trust that he was almost killed by the cultists when he visited his home to see his aged mother who was abandoned in the house. Ochia who said the cultists threatened to kill him if he refused to go back to where he was coming from, added that the communities had been deserted. The Police Public Relation Officer of the Imo State Police Command, DSP Andrew Enwerem, said the area was volatile because of infiltration of other cult groups from neighbouring communities of Rivets State.

Effort made to get the Army Public Relation Officer of the 34 Field Artillery Brigade Army, Obinze, Imo State, Capt.Ajemasu Jingina, to talk failed, as he did not pick several calls put across to him.

It would be recalled that few months back, cult groups killed 10 citizens of the communities, including a staff of Walter Smit Petroman Oil Ltd located in the area.



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