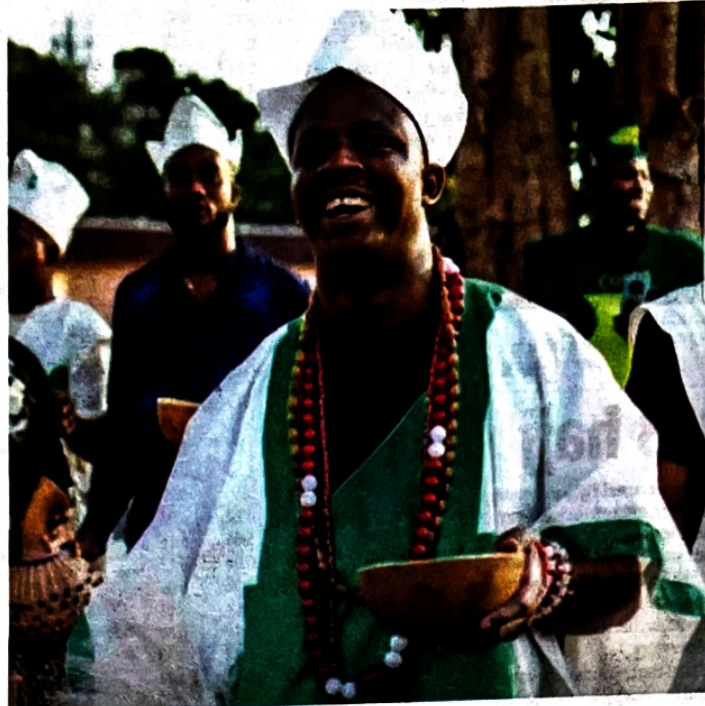


How final year UNIBEN student was killed



■ Late Desmond Rukevwe

Usman A. Bello, Benin

The University of Benin community was thrown into mourning following the killing of a final year student of the Public Administration Department of the institution identified as Desmond Rukevwe.

Desmond, popularly known as Mayor, a member of the institution's Kegite club was killed on Monday night by gunmen suspected to be cultists.

Recall that in March, a 400-level Computer Engineering student of the University of Benin, Mr. Destiny Osasenaga, was killed by gunmen suspected to be cultists.

The deceased was abducted from his residence in Uwelu, Benin City, by gunmen in the presence of his father and other family members by the suspected cult members who came in search of the senior brother who they said offended one of their members. They murdered him and dumped his corpse in the bush.

The gunman was said to have stormed Mayor's room in Hall 3 hostel, shot him in the face at close range and he died on the spot.

A student who spoke to our reporter on condition of anonymity, said Mayor's killing might be cult related as silent cult wars have been going on within Benin City and around the university.

The student, who also lives on campus, said there was no sporadic gunshot as at the time of the incident, that would have drawn students' attention to the hostel.

"At about 8pm when

The student said "the deceased is very jovial and friendly with everyone. He is calm and doesn't look for trouble."

some students were still reading, we heard gunshot twice but we didn't hear someone shouting, struggling or fighting within the block where Desmond resides alone in a room because of his position and office compared to others that are about eight in a room."

He said after the shooting, students rushed to the area, only to discover that it was a student that was killed.

He said the gunshots created fear on campus as students ran helter-skelter because no one knew who the killer was.

The student said "the deceased is very jovial and friendly with everyone. He is calm and doesn't look for trouble."

Meanwhile, the management of the institution declared lecture free day on Tuesday to mourn the deceased.

The institution's Public Relations Officer, Dr. Benedicta Ehanire, in a statement shortly after the incident condemned the killing.

She advised students to remain calm, saying the police and other security agencies are working hard to fish out and arrest the culprit.

She said the authorities are working closely with the

internal security units of the institution in ensuring that such incident does not happen again within the school's premises.

Meanwhile, the Edo State Police Command spokesperson, Chidi Nwabuzor, attributed the killing to the supremacy battle among rival cult groups.

"On April 3, the Divisional Police Officer in charge of Ugbowo division received a telephone call from the University of Benin's Chief Security Officer that the corpse of a young man was found on the campus by hall 3 and they moved to the scene and found the young man dead."

"Items recovered from the scene beside the deceased were a national identity card, voter card, UNIBEN identity card and a wrist watch. The corpse was recovered and deposited at the University Teaching Hospital.

"Preliminary investigation revealed that the deceased belong to Maphite confraternity and due to rival fight between the Maphite and Black Axe, the black axe member killed him and no arrest has been made so far."

He said the case would soon be transferred to the State Criminal Investigation Department for further investigation.