

NEWS

Gunmen kill 17 in Rivers

From Kelvin Ebiri Port Harcourt

ANOTHER wave of savage attacks by gunmen have left no fewer than seventeen persons dead in Omoku and two other communities in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Council of Rivers State.

During the dastardly attacks, which occurred between Wednesday night and yesterday morning, the son of the former chairman of Omoku Council of Chiefs, Mr. Richard Ogidi and a medical doctor, identified as Mr. Orike were abducted at gunpoint.

A source in Omoku disclosed to *The Guardian* that the unspecified number of gunmen suspected to be cult members, had invaded the Obosi area of the community at about 9p.m. on Wednesday shooting indiscriminately.

During the fierce gun battle that raged for several hours, four persons were shot dead, while two others who sustained severe gunshot injuries and said to be in critical condition, were rushed to the hospital.

"We were outside our compound eating on Wednesday night when suddenly we saw people running, and later heard sporadic gunshots. We rushed into the house and locked ourselves inside. Yesterday morning that we learnt

that the gunmen went to the home of a man and killed him," she said.

As sympathisers gathered yesterday morning to sympathise with the family of the slain man at Obosi, the gunmen stormed the area again, shooting and killed an aged woman and four young men.

The gunmen, whose identity is yet to be ascertained, also attacked a medical doctor as he was driving home. They left his bullet-riddled car, abducting him and he has not been seen since.

Former chairman of Omoku Council of Chiefs, Mr. Emenike Ogidi, told *The Guardian* that the gunmen, who invaded the community on Wednesday night, abducted his son, Richard, while on his way home.

"We were at home on Wednesday night when two of Richard's friend rushed to the house to inform us that some persons dressed in police uniform alighted from a red car along Oba Road by Victor Masi junction in front of Richard and then pointed gun at him. While still petrified, the gunmen forced him into the car and alleged he was being taken to the police station.

When I went to the police, neither Richard nor the gunmen were to be found," he said.

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