

Father of six hacked to death in Anambra leadership tussle

By Dom Ekpunobi, Onitsha | 23 August 2017 | 3:30 am



A local vigilance operative attached to Okpoko community in Ogbaru Local Council of Anambra State, Emmanuel Nwankwo, was yesterday hacked to death by a group of rampaging youths in the area over a protracted leadership crisis in the community.

Nwankwo, father of six and native of Ebonyi State, met his sudden death following his resistance to the take over of the mantle of leadership of Okpoko community by Chief Edwin Emesinwa as President-General of the community, from Linus Ezenwanma, the care-taker committee chairman.

Two vehicles and property worth N8 million were reportedly damaged during the impasse, which left the community in panic. An Onitsha High Court, presided over by Justice Chudi Nwanwko, had in its recent judgment in a suit filed by Emesinwa asking the court to return him to the seat to complete his tenure, granted Emesinwa's prayers, asking him to take over the mantle of leadership from Ezenwanma, who the state government had appointed as the care-taker committee chairman of the town union many years ago.

Armed with the court judgment in his favour, Emesinwa and his executive used the court bailiff and some policemen to eject Ezenwanma and his executive members out of office and then took over the mantle of leadership of the community.

It was gathered that barely 48 hours after Emesinwa and his supporters assumed office at the union's secretariat, a group of armed men suspected to be Ezenwanma loyalists laid ambush at the secretariat around 9:00p.m. on Monday.

According to a source, the vigilance operative was hacked to death in what appeared to be a resistant onslaught against the Emesinwa group, while three of his colleagues who drove with him to the secretariat, managed to escape death by the whiskers.

Confirming the incident, the Divisional Police Officer, at Okpoko, Elaigwu Gabriel Oyilo, told newsmen that Nwankwo's body had been deposited at the nearby hospital mortuary, while he had sent a signal to the state CID, for thorough investigations on the matter.

"The suspects have gone into hiding. No arrests have been made but we are closing in on them. When we were telling them to make peace they refused, see what has happened now," he said.

Meanwhile the union secretariat has since the incident been abandoned by both warring factions. According to the Secretary General of the community, Chief Raphael Agu, "few days after the execution of the court order by us taking over the secretariat, the caretaker committee came and sack us despite the court order. We reported the development to the police since the court was in recess. Some policemen were sent to effect the arrest of the caretaker committee members but they ran away.

When the police left, the caretaker committee mobilised and in the wee hours, stormed the homes of each of the vigilance operatives of the elected executive, beating them to a pulp. This led to Nwankwo's death though three others manage to escape."