

Despite invoking deity, hoodlums attack, kill two in Rivers

From Ann Godwin, Port Harcourt

1 **E**LDERS and chiefs in Choba community, Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State have invoked deities following strings of killings, kidnapping and armed robbery by suspected cultists.

However, few hours after the elders made the invocation, which they described as spiritual cleansing of the land, armed thugs still invaded the area and shot dead one Mr. Chibuike and a woman whose identity was not disclosed.

The Guardian gathered that the elders who were grieved by the rising killings and other criminal activities went round the community at midnight and the early hours of day invoking deities to prevent evil occurrences in the area. They also prayed against killings, kidnapping and robbery activities.

The youth leader of the community, Francis Ihunda, who confirmed the latest killing to journalists, described it as tragic. Ihunda noted that the gunmen after killing their target also invaded a shop in the area and took a car from its owner at gunpoint.

The state Police Public Relations Officer, Nnamdi

Omoni, said a lady was shot by the invaders, adding that she is currently undergoing treatment in an undisclosed health facility.

He said: "The report is filled with contradictions. When I called to confirm what happened, I was informed that only a woman was shot and that she is receiving treatment. I was not told if any man was shot."

In another development, the police have arrested a cop who shot a passenger over refusal to offer N100 bribe. The policeman, who was on a 'stop and search' duty at Evekwu axis along the East-West road with other officers had shot on a passenger who was travelling in a bus from Delta State to Port Harcourt.

The police spokesman who confirmed the incident, said the cop has been handed over to the

Criminal Investigation Department, adding that Section 237 of Police Code, which borders on how an officer should use firearm would be evoked on the suspect.

"The information we got was that two Agofure buses which loaded in Warri were travelling to Port Harcourt when officers stopped the first bus. So, the driver of the second bus and a passenger came down to approach the officer. While they were getting close to the officers to find out why the first bus was stopped, one of the policemen shot the passenger on the leg," the PPRO said.

But a passenger in the bus told newsmen that the policeman pulled his trigger against the victim when he requested that the officer allow their bus to go without paying N100.

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