

# One killed, many wounded as suspended Imo LG officials attempt to resume duty

By Charles Ogugbuaja  
and Collins Osuji, Owerri

07 January 2020 | 3:48  
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One person has been killed and many injured in the fracas that followed the attempt by suspended chairman and councillors of Imo State councils attempted to gain entrance into the secretariats to occupy their former seats.

A youth identified as Amajuru Ahamefule, a supervisor from Umundugba, Isu Council, was killed yesterday at the council's premises while others sustained varying degrees of injury.

Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO) in the state, Orlando Ikeokwu, confirmed the incident but said security operatives had restored normalcy in the area.

He added that the body of the deceased had been deposited to a morgue.

Governor Emeka Ihedioha had on assumption of duty last year, in compliance with the resolution of the House of Assembly, suspended all the 27 chairmen and councillors who were elected under the administration of Rochas Okorocha. He replaced them with Interim Management Committees (IMCs).

The embattled officials had relied on the December 11, 2019, Supreme Court judgement, in the suit instituted by the 16 dissolved Ekiti chairmen and councillors, declaring that it was wrong for any governor of House of Assembly to sack elected local council chiefs.

The state government, in a statement, had warned the suspended council chiefs to stay away from the councils' headquarters, but the state's chapter of Association of Local Governments of Nigeria (ALGON) would hear none of that.

Policemen stormed various council headquarters to provide security as the fracas unfolded, dispersing the suspended chairmen, councillors and their supporters.

A statement signed at the weekend by the Secretary to the Government of Imo State (SGI), Uche Onyeagocha, had warned the suspended officials not to attempt entering the councils' secretariats.

However, the labour unions, including Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), Trade Union Congress (TUC) and Nigeria Union of Local Government Employees (NULGE), in their joint statement, had urged the suspended council chiefs to exhaust the legal option first before the confrontation.

But the police described the invasion of the council headquarters by the suspended officials as criminal, unethical and illegal.



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Ikeokwu told The Guardian yesterday that there was no judgement that gave such directive in the state, insisting that the matter was still in court.

“The suspended council executives had yesterday hinged their action on the directive of the Supreme Court judgement concerning their Ekiti State counterparts in the state.

“You can’t import judgement from another state and begin to enforce it in the state. Each matter is treated based on its peculiarity and nature. There may be similarity in a matter, but it does not mean that the judgements will be the same.

“So whatever they are doing is absolutely illegal and criminal,” he said.

Asked if the police made an arrest, the spokesman replied, “For now, we are trying to forestall any breakdown of law and order. After that, a possible arrest will follow those who actually perpetrated the criminal act.”



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