

Ayade's aide, two others killed in Calabar's cult war

By Agosi Todo, Calabar
and Charles Ogugbuaja,
Owerri

18 May 2020 | 3:13 am

• Gunmen kill NDLEA official in Imo, abduct the couple

Despite the disruption of social activities occasioned by the coronavirus pandemic, the throes of incessant cult clash threatening the peace and security of Cross River State reared its ugly head at the weekend when a former chapter chairman of the People's Democratic Party (PDP), Ekpenyong Akom and an aide to Governor Ben Ayade of Cross River State was on Saturday night, shot dead by gunmen in a suspected cult attack in front of his house.

The incident, it was gathered, occurred at about 8:00 p.m. on Saturday night at a joint close to the deceased house at Akai Efa in Calabar Municipality Local Government Area of Cross River.

Already, no less than 20 persons have been killed within three weeks in the state in different cult clashes in Calabar, Odukpani, Boki Yakurr and other parts, heightening the insecurity in the state.

At the weekend, three persons were shot dead, including Akom. Akom was reportedly killed by the suspected rival cult group, while the other two were hacked down on Friday night at St. Mary Street, off Ekpo Abasi and Ibeku Street by Ikom Street.

According to a family source who pleaded anonymity, Akom was playing WHOT card with his friends at one of his brother's joint, simply identified as CY, when the gunmen stormed the place before singling him out and shot him dead. The source said: "The gunmen shot him and they made sure he was dead ('confirmed him') before they left in a waiting vehicle."

Speaking further, he revealed that Akom had denounced membership of a cult group a long time ago but wonders why he could be targeted in the recent cult wars in Calabar. The source also said that the deceased, currently an aide to Governor Ben Ayade, left behind a wife who is heavily pregnant and four children.

When contacted yesterday, the Cross River Police Public Relations Officer, DSP Irene Ugbo, confirmed the killing. "I am aware of the tragic incident but cannot substantiate because we are investigating the matter. He was killed by gunmen suspected to be cultists. I will make available more information about the matter later today when I have been properly briefed, it is a sad development," she said.

On his part, the State Security Adviser to Governor Ayade, South, Mr. Ani Esin, lamented the rival cult clashes, adding that that the incident was unfortunate. "The



HURIWA to Buhari: NDLC, National Assembly stinks of corruption

1 day ago

victim was a former chapter chairman of PDP in Odukpani. The clash was between Klans and Axe members.

“He was shot and died on the spot. He was suspected to be a member of Klanx and was gunned down by suspected members of Axe. The cults operations are not only in Calabar but in Bakassi, Okukpani and its environs.

“I am also aware of the clash, which occurred on Friday and two persons were gunned down. When I spoke with the Divisional Police Officer (DPO), he confirmed that two suspected cultists were gunned down. The incident occurred between the Klanx and Axe members. The victims are one Klanx and one Axe. The community assisted in arresting one of the suspects at the scene and handed him over to the Mbukpa Police Station.

“Those who are already there should find ways to leave the cult groups. It doesn't pay to belong to cult groups and you don't gain anything deadly,” he advised.

These reoccurring incidents have created fear in the people as shops and businesses were forced to close down for fear of being hit by stray bullets or robbed at the scene of the fracas.

Meanwhile, two officers of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) were killed at the weekend while two others sustained injuries when suspected kidnappers attacked them in Owerri, the Imo State capital. The officers were attached to the Joint Security Taskforce team of the ‘Operation Search and Flush’ patrol team.

The incident, it was learnt, happened at Ohi Junction on Orlu Road around 6.30 pm on Friday. It was gathered that the kidnappers had seized an unidentified woman inside the city centre and drove away with her. But when they approached Amakohia flyover, there was a gridlock because of the ongoing lockdown.



FG approves police reorganisation, additional department, zonal commands

1 day ago

Upon noticing that some armed security men were on the road, the woman attempted to jump out of the vehicle, waving and shouting to the security officers she had been kidnapped. The kidnappers manouvered the traffic snarl and sped off towards Orlu road while the security men jumped into their vehicle and chased after the abductors.

It was gathered that there was an exchange of gunfire as they chased the abductors. The matter came to a head when the kidnappers stopped at Ohi Junction and engaged the security men in the gun battle. In the process, two of the NDLEA officers were gunned down while other members of the JTF sustained various degrees of injuries.

The state police spokesman, SP Orlando Ikeokwu, confirmed the incident to newsmen. “Three NDLEA were shot, one died, two injured,” Ikeokwu said, adding effort was ongoing to apprehend the perpetrators.