

Tension as stray bullet kills youth in Rivers community

From **Obinna Nwaoku**, Port Harcourt

THERE was tension, yesterday, in Onne Community in Eleme Local Council of Rivers State, following the death of a youth, identified as Victor Amasi, who was hit by a stray bullet, allegedly shot by security personnel deployed to ensure peaceful conduct of a youth election.

The Guardian gathered that the Onne Youth Council had scheduled to hold their election yesterday, but after arrival of the delegates, the electoral committee allegedly suspended the process following the alleged directives by some individuals who they described as powers from Eleme Council Authority.

An indigene of the community, who confirmed the incident, said the suspension of the election, involving David Osaroba, Tobiah Silas-Tete, and Samuel Owinkpe as frontline contenders, resulted in a rowdy session with some delegates marching to the place of the traditional ruler in protest.

The source claimed that the traditional ruler and other stakeholders had after careful consideration of the situation and pressure by some youths and women in the area, declared David Osaroba as winner.

According to the source, the declaration heightened the tension, leading to the shooting into the air by security operatives to douse the situation, but the victim was allegedly hit by a stray bullet, resulting in his death on his way to the hospital.

"We conducted the Onne Youth Council election today and our preferred candidate was declared the winner.

"There were other interested parties who wanted to hijack the process, but when they saw our delegates are more than theirs, the electoral committee chairman had to cancel the election.

"After the other group had happily gone, the people of Onne, chiefs, and elders, declared David Osaroba as the winner of the election.

"As I speak to you, one of our supporters has been shot dead by some security personnel, who were there to supervise the election," the source added.

MEANWHILE, the State Police Command has denied that its personnel shot the youth in Onne Community.

The Command's spokesperson, Grace Iringe-Koko, told *The Guardian* that the Command is yet to get any report about any death.