

Cultists kill one in Ahoada town amid Rivers political tension

From Obinna Nwaoku,
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TRAGEDY struck on Tuesday night, June 18, as suspected cultists shot and killed one Endwell Awunze at Ula-Pata community in Ahoada town.

The incident occurred amid a brewing political crisis in Rivers State, with reports indicating that cultists were regrouping in various parts of the state.

The Guardian learnt that the killing sparked concerns over escalation of violence and potential breakdown of law and order.

It was reported that Awunze was a whistleblower who exposed cultism and violent crimes in Okporowo community, Ahoada East Local Council.

According to sources, Awunze might have been closing in on some suspects before his tragic murder.

"His courageous efforts to combat cultism may have ulti-

mately led to his untimely demise," a community source said.

Awunze was reportedly last seen leaving a protest venue, opposite the Ahoada East Local Council headquarters, where demonstrators had gathered to oppose the tenure extension of the council's chairman.

It was said that Awunze departed the scene at about 7:00 p.m., and boarded a motorcycle.

The source revealed that as Awunze rode on the motorcycle, along Ula-Pata road, three armed assailants opened fire on him. He died on the spot, while the motorcyclist sustained gunshot wounds and was rushed to a hospital.

The body of Awunze, a dedicated oil pipeline surveillance worker, was still at the scene of the incident when *The Guardian* visited yesterday.

The death, meanwhile, has sparked outrage and anxiety in the community, highlighting the perilous nature of his work

and the need for improved security.

A human rights organisation, Centre for Basic Rights Protection and Accountability Campaign, lamented the negative effects the political crisis could have on the state.

National coordinator, Comrade Prince Wiro, said cultists and other criminal elements may take advantage of the chaotic situation and perpetrate evil.

He therefore urged political gladiators in the state to carry out their activities within the confines of the law.

When contacted, spokesperson for Rivers State Police Command, SP Grace Iringe-Koko, who confirmed the tragic incident, said unknown gunmen were responsible for the fatal attack.

She added that the police are currently investigating the matter and assured the public that they are working to unravel the circumstances surrounding the death.