

Fighting Over the Spoils

According to police, cults, and other sources, after the PDP primaries Nwoye began channeling funds into the hands of members of his own Black Axe cult to the exclusion of other cult groups in the state.²⁶⁶ Several cult groups including the Vikings and the Buccaneers saw this as deeply unfair and reacted violently. Some also complained that they were not paid in full for working on behalf of Andy Uba's campaign during the primaries.²⁶⁷

Human Rights Watch interviewed several cult members in Anambra in February 2007, two months before the April elections. According to then-Police Commissioner Haruna John and to cult members themselves, at least seven people were killed in a series of tit-for-tat assassinations between Black Axe and other cult members in the week prior to those interviews alone. Several of those killed had been gunned down in the streets of Awka, and the violence had the effect of terrorizing local residents.²⁶⁸

Two members of the Vikings cult who had been involved in planning the February 2007 wave of violence compared Andy Uba's gubernatorial campaign to an "oil well" whose revenues they should be entitled to share.²⁶⁹ One of them explained:

In our tertiary institutions we have a lot of secret cult families. The politicians use the secret cults. The problem [now] is other families are fighting the Black Axe so that we can come in and get work. Tony [Nwoye] is hijacking everything for the Black Axe because he is Black Axe. Other families are asking questions—why is the money meant for use in Anambra being hijacked for use only by this other group? That money is what they want to eat alone without sharing with other groups.²⁷⁰

²⁶⁶ Human Rights Watch interviews with cult members and police sources, Awka, February 2007.

²⁶⁷ Ibid.

²⁶⁸ Human Rights Watch interview with Haruna John, Awka, February 14, 2007; Human Rights Watch interviews with cult members, Awka, February 2007.

²⁶⁹ Human Rights Watch interview with Vikings members, Awka, February 14, 2007.

²⁷⁰ Ibid.