

Four Killed In Imo Cult Clash

By Ben Duru

CORRESPONDENT, Owerri

A clash of outlawed cult groups at the Federal Polytechnic, Nekede in Imo State on Tuesday left four students dead and four buildings in ruins.

The clash which occurred between the Black Axe and Viking Fraternities at Umumbazu village, Nekede in Owerri West Council, is a continuation of the rivalry between the cults which started years back.

One had positioned itself for battle in the vicinity after it suspected that the other group planned to hold an event.

The attack led to the free use of guns and other dangerous weapons, claiming the lives of four cult members.

But Deputy Police Commissioner, Ahmed Yusuf, said only three bodies were picked up by the police when they arrived at the scene.

He confirmed that the fighting was between members of the Black Axe and the Vikings. Seven suspects have been ar-

Continues on A2

Four Killed In Imo Cult Clash

Continued from A1

rested and 17 others declared wanted, he added.

Yusuf said police officers have been deployed in the area to restore normalcy, and acting Inspector General of Police, Mike Okiro, has been briefed.

Police officers keep vigil at the scene and monitor the

movement of students, both in the polytechnic and the Federal University of Technology, Owerri (FUTO).

The traditional ruler of the community, Eze Jonas Agumanu, described the incident as the worst since he ascended the throne, saying the gun duel would never be forgotten.

He recounted that as the battle was going on, people were afraid that soldiers had invaded the village and some made efforts to escape.

"I was told that the two rival cult groups engaged themselves in a fierce gun battle at Umumbazu, Nekede. When the firing

ceased, about four persons were reported dead," he said.

"It is sad that these youngsters, who are believed to be the leaders of Nigeria's tomorrow, are not only armed to the teeth but do not have any respect for human lives. Nigeria is obviously in trouble."