

# Cult Clash: Traditional Ruler, Others Feared Killed In Rivers

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Hundreds of people who fled their homes in the Obelle, Ibaa Community of Emohua Local Government Area of Rivers State on Wednesday, following a cult clash, are yet to return.

Also, there were speculations that the crisis may have claimed no fewer than 20 lives, including a traditional chief who was beheaded in the course of the clash.

The victim, Alexander Egonu, was said to have been beheaded by the suspects in his house while the others were members

of the community.

A local government official said the incident was as a result of a cult clash.

Another observer of developments in the community said the cultists were on a revenge mission over the killing of their member by a rival cult group suspected to be enjoying the support of the beheaded chief.

According to the observer, "The cause of the crisis is chieftaincy and cultism, the central theme of the latest orgy

or murder."

But a native, who simply gave his name as Mr. Ubochi, told *Sunday Independent* that the cult group had earlier gone to the beheaded chief to complain about the killing of its member who was said to have been skinned alive and killed, for him to intervene in the matter.

"Apparently angered by the chief's sluggish and hazy approach to the complaint, the cult group swooped on him and the others who met the same fate with him in the village on

Wednesday night on a revenge mission," he said.

Ogbako Ikwerre Convention, the apex socio-cultural body of the Ikwerre in Rivers State, has already waded into the matter to settle the rift and bring normalcy to the troubled community.

Meanwhile, the number of those killed in the attack were still conflicting as at Saturday, as some people claim between eight and 10 people had died, while Mrs. Rita Abbe, the Rivers Police Command's Public Relations Officer, told our correspondent over the phone on Friday that she was yet to get the report.