

Panic in Imo as ritualists kill four

By **Anolu Vincent**
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INDIGENES OF Naze and Ohekelem communities in the Owerri North and Ngor Okpala local government areas of Imo State have passionately appealed to Governor Rochas Okorocha to save them from the hands of ritualists who now appear incognito in their areas.

The appeal came on the heels of bouts of ritual killings and abductions of some indigenes of the areas by suspected ritualists who not only behead their victims but also dismember other

parts of their bodies.

So far, four persons have been killed.

Among the victims of such barbaric acts was a female whose headless body was discovered on the roadside at Naze with the private parts removed while a man in his early 40s had his head decapitated by unidentified hoodlums.

Consequently, the communities have resorted to vigils and night prayers to ward off any evil spirit behind the saga, while setting up formidable vigilance groups to avert further decimation of their population.

An indigene of Naze commu-

nity, who operates a retail business adjacent to the Federal Polytechnic, Nekede Road and who gave his name as Onyemachi Njoku, told *Sunday Independent* that the indigenes had resorted to move in groups from 7 p.m. while Okada (commercial motorcycle) riders who ferry students to the area have been directed to stay away from the same period.

Attempt by *Sunday Independent* to get in touch with the presidents of Naze town union proved abortive, but a member of the executive of the union who spoke anonymously denounced the trend but vowed that suspects apprehended would not

be spared.

He attributed the trend to the "Get quick rich mentally" of the youths and appealed to Governor Okorocha to save the community from further agony.

Residents of Owerri town are also not taking chances in respect of the security challenges. The highbrow areas of Aladinma, Ikenegbu, World Bank, Prefab and the adjoining areas of Akwakuma, Amakohia, Oji, Egbu and Irette have since re-adjusted their security measures.

Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Vitalis Onogu (DSP), had advised the people to report all suspected movements in their

Multiple crash claim one, injure many in Mbaise

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A **MIDDLE** aged man died instantly, while some others sustained varying degrees of injury, following a multiple automobile crash which occurred Thursday along the ever-busy Owerri-Umuahia road.

Sunday Independent correspondent, who was at the scene of the incident, noticed that ~~although four vehicles were~~ involved in crash, the major

culprit sped away after noticing the effect of his carelessness.

While the lone occupant of the Nissan saloon car with registration number SF 609 KJA died instantly, a few passengers in the Bourmita branded Toyota Hiace bus, XC 663 WEN, suffered varying degrees of injury and were rushed to hospital.

The driver of an Imo Transport Company (ITC), whose vehicle, a Mitsubishi L300 bus, XG 109 PHC, was involved in the crash, gave a graphic account

of how the accident happened to some officers of Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC).

"The driver of the Nissan vehicle was overtaking the Bourmita-branded bus, as they were descending the hill and heading towards Mbaise. Sadly, the driver of another red Japanese car opted to overtake from the right of the bus," the ITC driver recounted.

He added that the Bourmita-branded bus, who was helmed in at the time, brushed the Nissan car and it started somersaulting.

"The bus driver equally lost control and crashed into my bus, which I parked neatly and off the road, as soon as I saw what was happening before me. The driver of the red Japanese car sped away."

None of the FRSC officers at the scene wanted to talk to *Sunday Independent* at the scene, but they recovered what they thought were the dead man's prized belongings and later his remains was taken to the mortuary.