

Gunmen Kill 30 Over Chieftaincy Stool In Benue



By Our Correspondents On Aug 11, 2020 4:51 AM

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MAKURDI / UYO – No fewer than thirty persons may have lost their lives on Monday in an early morning attack following a chieftaincy tussle for the stool of Alegwu of Edikwu in Ukpogo community, Edikwu, Apa Local Government Area (LGA) of Benue.

While residents told *Daily Independent* that thirty persons lost their lives to the attack, the state police command confirmed 13 deaths.

Bedroom Ad

Daily Independent gathered that the attack may have allegedly been carried out by suspected armed militia gang sponsored by a contender to the disputed stool, who lost the seat and has since been on self-exile.

While there was an earlier attack on the community over the disputed stool in May, 2020, we also learnt that the dispute over the stool dates back to 1994.

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The State Command Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), DSP Sewuese Anene, confirmed the attack as

well as insisted that there were 13 deaths.

Daily Independent learnt that the assailants, who had invaded the community at about 4:30a.m on Monday, also left scores injured, even as three houses were razed during the attack.

Furthermore, it was learnt that since the disagreement in 1994, there had been persistent killings by armed gangs, allegedly hired by one of the aggrieved contenders to the stool.

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Following the attack in May, the state deputy governor, Benson Abounu, on behalf of Governor Samuel Ortom, had presided over a peace meeting where it was agreed that the warring parties sheathe their swords and embrace peace.

The Acting Alegwu, Chief Otokpa Imoni, who succeeded his father, late Chief Imoni Otokpa, who had passed away in 2018, confirmed the incident.

The Alegwu, who spoke with *Daily Independent* on phone, explained that “the present one (attack) took place this morning when hooded gun-wielding militiamen entered Ukpogo community at about 4:30a.m and began to shoot anything that showed signs of life.”

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Similarly, suspected cultists on Sunday killed one person and disrupted a church service, leaving scores with injuries in Inen community, Oruk Anam Council Area of Akwa Ibom State.

The faceoff, our correspondent gathered, started on Saturday afternoon when Inen community leaders gathered at the clan council hall for a solemn assembly praying to God to intervene in the series of cult-related killings that had rocked the area in recent times.

While the prayer session was in progress, the cultists invaded Ikot Obio Idang village and killed one person simply identified as Ufot and beat others, causing the village clan council members to scramble for safety.

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The suspected cultists, according to our source, re-mobilised on Sunday morning and waylaid residents of Ikot Obio Idang village and also beat a trader, seized all her wares, and left her unconscious and in the pool of her own blood.

An eyewitness, Udo Akanimoh, told our correspondent that Qua Iboe and The Apostolic Church worshippers close to the scene of the incident were forced to dismiss as the hoodlums went berserk and manhandled anybody found around the area.

“The boys returned to the village on Sunday morning after killing Ufot and beat a retail shop dealer, carted away her goods while the Qua Iboe Church and The Apostolic Church members ran away from their churches.

“Till now residents of the community have not returned home and we are afraid of staying here. Our women and children have run away to neighbouring villages,” he said.

The Akwa Ibom State Police Public Relations Officer, CSP Nnunan Frederick, when contacted, said the state police headquarters had not received any report of the incident but promised to contact the Divisional Police Officer (DPO) of the area.

“I only work in the metropolis. I have not received the report yet from the DPO of Oruk Anam,” he said.

 Civil Servant Ad

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