

# 8 Feared Killed As Cultists Clash In Imo

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Eight persons have been reported killed as cultists clashed in Awarra and Ochia communities of Ohaji/Egbema local government area of Imo State.

A community leader who disclosed this to LEADERSHIP on condition of anonymity, lamented the inability of the state government to checkmate the deadly onslaught of the cultists in the communities.

“Eight persons have so far been killed in this clash by the cultists here. Out of the eight lives reported dead, five were members of the cult groups, while three community members

slumped and died when they heard the sound of the guns. One person who was abducted is yet to be seen,” the community leader said.

He called on the police and Imo State Government to intervene by making sure that those who ran away from the communities to neighbouring communities out of fear of being killed return safely.

“Our people have become displaced and taken refuge in churches in neighbouring communities like Assa, Obile, Obosima, and Umuokanne and they’re dying because they have no food, no access to their homes and farmlands. Imagine people living outside their homes in this economic hardship,” he said.

As part of the measures to restore peace to the communities, he said a committee has been constituted in Awara and Ochia to come out with measures to address the crisis.

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The community leader expressed hope that the committee would do a good job in the restoration of lasting peace in the area. “We need peace to return to our communities so that people can live normal life.”

When contacted, Imo State Police Public Relations Officer, Henry Okoye said the security agencies have been receiving complaints about attacks being perpetrated by some criminal elements in the areas.

“The police have been doing a lot to restore peace in Ohaji. The Commissioner of Police has engaged in a series of meetings with stakeholders of Ohaji. The police in collaboration with other security agencies have enhanced security strategy.

“Ohaji’s security also lies with the people of the area because there’s no way we can actually get it right without the maximum cooperation from the people.

“The Commissioner of Police has personally visited Ohaji. The cooperation with the stakeholders is yielding results because we have made several arrests. The security of Ohaji has improved since the current police boss came. We are doing everything possible to restore peace and order in the vicinity.”

A youth leader who pleaded anonymity stressed that the clash was a supremacy battle between contending cult groups over the control of proceeds from oil companies operating in

the communities.

“It is a battle by two groups over who will control the proceeds of the money that comes to Awarra and Ochia communities by the oil companies that operate there. One group is controlled by a man called Acid while the other is led by Achis, seeking to dislodge each other,” he said.