

# Three die as cultists clash in Ekpoma

By [WALE AJETUNMOBI](#) 30/08/2012 00:00:00

•Ambrose Alli University gate •Ambrose  
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It all started as an argument in a bar. Then, it snowballed into a skirmish. Within two

days, two students were dead, cut down by guns and machetes in a sleepy neighbourhood. Another student was hit by bullets; he writhed in pains and moved unsteadily until he fell with his face to the ground. With no help from the frightened populace, the injured young man died on the spot.

This is not a scene from a Hollywood blockbuster. It all happened at the Ambrose Alli University (AAU), Ekpoma.

When students resumed for the second semester last July, none of them had the premonition of a violent encounter between two rival cult groups; they were looking forward to a hitch-free semester. Barely two weeks after resumption, the campus was thrown into turmoil, following the cult groups' disagreement. At the time of filing this report, residents of the off-campus hostels adjacent to the school were living in fear.

Some students, who spoke to CAMPUSLIFE, recalled what led to the crisis. According to them, the trouble started last semester when a member of Vikings Confraternity waylaid two students at a quiet

off-campus location, dispossessing them of their mobile phones.

Unknown to the attacker, one of his victims was a brother to a Black Axe member. This development re-ignited the age-long war between the rival cult groups. But the fracas, it seemed, was postponed to the current semester.

When the new semester kicked off a few weeks ago, a violent clash ensued between members of the Black Axe Confraternity, popularly called Aye, and the Vikings. This time, the Vikings alleged foul play in the university's anti-cultism war. The other group allegedly accused the Vikings of "profiling". The Black Axe accused Vikings of using its former members now working in the university's anti-cult unit to spy on Vikings members and activities.

Attempts to settle the rift failed as a member of the Black Axe was allegedly gunned down. In retaliation, members of the Black Axe shot two students.

A final year student, who did not want to be named, said some of the slain students might have been rusticated. He declined giving their names.

"For anybody, who is conversant with happenings at Ekpoma, such killings are regular that no one is surprised any longer. One of the students killed in the latest clash was not in school; he may have been rusticated. But I am sure he must have been deceiving his parents at home. The university management knows what to do if they are serious about getting the culprits," the 500-Level Law student said.

Others, who spoke to CAMPUSLIFE, urged the university

management to stop the cult clashes within and outside the campus. They urged the management to scrutinise the membership of the anti-cult unit.

According to them, some ex-cultists, who claimed to have renounced cultism, are still neck-deep in the practice. "They hang in there, feeding their members with security information" said a student in Chemistry department.

Not done yet, the cultists were said to have taken the battle outside the campus, provoking a statement from the university, following reports of a crisis in the school.

In the statement, the Public Relations Officer of the university, Mr Chris Adamaigbo, said there was no crisis on the campus.

The statement reads: "There was no clash in the university, let alone the killing of students. The management urges the public not to always associate what happens in town with the university."

Reacting to Adamaigbo's statement, a student of Political Science, who craved anonymity, said on most occasions, management was not aware of what transpired off-campus.

"Though, the campus is peaceful but the people killing themselves in Ekpoma are students of an institution. If they are not our students, who are they then?" he queried, urging the university authorities to strengthen security around the off-campus hostels.

Speaking to our correspondent on phone, Edo State Police Command spokesman Anthony Airhuoyo, confirmed the incident, but declined further comments. Attempts to get the Students' Union Government (SUG) officials for comment failed as CAMPUSLIFE