

## Ex-militant killed in Rivers' cult clash

Rosemary Nwisi, Port Harcourt

An ex-militant, ThankGod Okpo, has been killed in a cult clash at Rumuoro Ogbakiri, Emuoha Local Government of Rivers State.

The 24-year-old, was reportedly killed when two rival cult groups – De-Well and De-Gbam– clashed at a funeral.

It was gathered that a member of De-Well group on April 12 disrupted the wake of the late mother of Brig-Gen. Ama, who hails from the community.

The De-Gbam group promised to avenge the disruption during the wake for the late mother of a De-Well leader.

During the wake, the De-Gbam group came on a reprisal attack.

The deceased's father, Dennis Okpo, said his son's remains were in a morgue in Port Harcourt.

It was learnt that the deceased died in a hospital, following matchete cuts.

The victim was among the early beneficiaries of the late President Musa Yar'Adua's amnesty to restive youths of the Niger Delta.

It was gathered that he was among the first set who accepted the amnesty in the local government.

He surrendered his arms to the then council chairman, Emeka Woke, at Rumuekpe community school field in 2011.

ThankGod came back from Malaysia last November where he was trained in pipeline welding for one year.

A source said the deceased took to okada riding after his return.

"He was taking his younger brother, who was injured at the funeral to the hospital, when they were waylaid by the suspected killers.

"His elder brother was also with them, but his siblings were not attacked.

"I suspect he was a cult member because the killers hacked him to death, without touching his siblings."

But the elder Okpo said his son was not a cultist. "My son was not a member of De-well or De-Gbam, but a repentant militant, a repentant militant cannot be a cultist.

"He was never a cultist even before he accepted the amnesty."

It was gathered that ThankGod was not at the funeral but was told by his mother to take his younger brother to the hospital.

When our reporter visited the community, peace had returned in the area and cult members had gone into hiding for fear of arrest.

Residents said the police are on routine patrol in the community.

They claimed two people had been arrested.