



THERE was outrage in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State, yesterday following the murder of some corps members by cultists.

It was gathered that the cultists stormed the corps members' residence on School Road in Swali and shot three of them.

Two were confirmed dead at the Federal Medical Centre (FMC) in Yenagoa, and the third is receiving treatment at the hospital.

The victims were Popoola Oluwatobi Olamide (30), a graduate of Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU) and an indigene of Oyo State; George Onokpoma and Gbenga Dada.

Olamide reportedly died on the spot. Onokpoma died at the FMC. Dada was said to be receiving treatment at the hospital. Their room was riddled with bullets and there were blood stains on the floor.

Residents lampooned the security agencies for their inability to tame the rampaging gunmen. They wondered how

## Cultists kill corps members in Bayelsa

•Residents lambast police, security agencies

From Mike Odiegwu,  
Yenagoa

a small town like Yenagoa, with headquarters of the 16 Brigade of the Army, Central Naval Command, Mobility Command of the Air Force, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), the Joint Task Force, Operation DeltaSafe (ODS), the police, Department of State Security (DSS) and other security outfits could be overrun by cultists.

A resident said the hoodlums, about seven, attacked the corps members' residence about 9pm.

He said: "We heard gunshots from the direction of the corps members' room. One of them was screaming repeatedly and asking what their offence was. Another gunshot sounded and there was silence."

Another neighbour added that the victims were marking examination scripts when the gunmen barricaded the building.

"We are saddened by this incident. The deceased were quiet and easy-going individuals. They hardly kept late night. They were always sitting at their doorpost whenever there was power outage," he said.

Angry reactions have trailed the general insecurity in Yenagoa, and the murder of the corps members. Most residents questioned the essence of having many security outfits in the capital city.

An eyewitness, who identified himself as David, said he saw the bodies and wondered why insecurity had been allowed to degenerate.

He said: "What is Yenagoa

turning into? The level of insecurity is alarming. Two Youth Corps members killed this night at Swali community by suspected robbers."

When I saw the bodies at the Federal Medical Center, I was troubled in my spirit. What will become of their parents who have spent hard resources to send them to school only to lose them while serving their fatherland, the land that doesn't have faith in the ability of the youths?"

Another resident, Fawe, lamented that Yenagoa had become notorious for unpleasant and criminal incidents. He blamed political actors for the development.

He said: "Unpleasant news every day in Yenagoa. A minimum of two security personnel to the least political appointee while the citizens share

one incompetently trained and underfed policeman to a whole street, or none at all.

"Those who call the shots live in well guarded environments and go about in bullet proof cars purchased with taxpayers' money."

"Yenagoa is not bigger than Ada George Road in Port Harcourt. It's the worst thing to lose a child. Now what will be of the parents of the deceased?"

It was gathered that Commissioner of Police Olusholla David visited the State Secretariat of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) and met with the State Director, Mrs. Lotto Bolade.

David assured the NYSC of a rejigged security strategy to ensure the safety of corps members.

The police boss promised to brief Governor Seriake Dickson on the incident.

He said: "No one will hear the incident and not be shocked. The corps members may be scared but I assure them there will be improved security under my watch."

A statement by the police spokesman, Butswat Asinim, said the police had launched a manhunt for the fleeing cultists.

The statement reads: "On 20 March, about 22:00 hours, about seven robbers attacked the residence of Jerry Yeseme Moses 'M', proprietor of a school at Swali Yenagoa."

"The robbers killed one corps member, Oluwatobi Popoola (30), and shot two others - George Onokpoma (M) and Anthony Gbenga Dada. The victims were rushed to the Federal Medical Centre in Yenagoa where George Onokpoma was confirmed dead, while Anthony Gbenga is responding to treatment."

"The command has launched a manhunt for the gunmen and investigation is ongoing."

Lagos Country Club to meet