

3 Six feared killed in Anambra cultists' clashes

Police intercept gunman, recover AK-47 rifle

Michael Ovat | Awka

SIX persons have been feared killed in Awka, the Anambra State capital during the Easter period in what is suspected to be cult clashes.

It was gathered that while some were killed at Okpuno area, behind Juhel, others were killed at Eke Awka and Obinagu areas.

In one of the incidents, suspected cultists stormed opposite Dike Park, around Eke Awka market, in their numbers and unleashed violence.

A source said the incident occurred on Sunday afternoon, before it spread to Obinagu area where some people were shot by the cultists.

It was further learnt that one of the persons hit by bul-

let was a staff of the Anambra State Judiciary, simply identified as Mr Nwofor.

The victim was said to be going about his normal business when the cultists stormed the area.

This was corroborated by a video trending on social media showing bodies of two persons shot at Eke Awka area.

One of the victims was seen struggling for survival beside his motorcycle where he fell, while people in the area scampered for safety to avoid being caught in the violence.

A resident of Awka who did not want his name mentioned said: "I suspected that there would be cult killings during this period.

"You know that most of the cultists leave town, but during festive periods, they always

return to celebrate and their rivals use the opportunity to pay them back for their past atrocities."

Meanwhile, the state Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Ikenga Tochukwu, said there was no such report of cult killings during the Easter period before him.

In another development, policemen over the weekend arrested an adult male holding a bag in Awada, Idemili North Local Government Area of the State, which contained a weapon.

The police spokesperson, who disclosed this in a statement said the man, on sighting the police, took to his heels and was chased until he was caught.

He said: "When the bag was searched, it was found

to contain an AK-47 rifle with breech No. 25008266. A search of database showed the gun was not among firearms on charge to the state police command.

"However, on interrogation, the suspect disclosed that the weapon was procured for a showdown with a rival cult group.

"The state Commissioner of Police, Aderemi Adeoye, while commending the police officers who made the recovery for their vigilance and tenacity of purpose, directed that the investigation be widened and deepened to bring to book all those connected with arms trafficking, including an alleged financier based abroad who provided the funds for the purchase of the rifle."