

One killed as vigilance group, youths clash in Imo

Fidelis Soriwei, Owerri

A youngman identified by the police as Nicholas Ihonma, 21, was on Monday evening killed by members of a vigilance group at Obizi and Oboukwu autonomous communities of Ezinihitte/Mbaise Local Government area of Imo State.

Police sources said an unspecified number of youths from the two communities also sustained varying degrees of injury from the hands of the members of the security group.

Trouble started when youths of the two communities embarked on a peaceful protest over an alleged assault of a young man from one of the communities by the security men.

What began as a peaceful protest in the community, however, turned violent when the angered members of the vigilance group opened fired on the protesters, killing Ihonma and injuring several others.

Angered by the turn of events, youths of Obizi and Oboukwu attacked the palaces of the traditional rulers of the two communities and set ablaze a car in each of the two compounds.

The aggrieved youths, it was learnt, also razed the a

civic centre located at Obizi in protest against the killing of their kinsman by the members of the local security outfit.

Investigation conducted by our correspondent revealed that the youths decided to attack the residences of the two traditional rulers because of the generally held belief that they were behind the engagement of the vigilance organisation for security purposes in the sister communities.

Meanwhile, the Police Public Relations Officer of the Imo State Police Command, Mr. Linus Nwaaiwu, an assistant superintendent of police, who confirmed the incident to our correspondent on Tuesday in Owerri, said the new Commissioner of Police in the state, Mr. Donald Iroham, had visited the crisis spot for an assessment of the situation.

Nwaiwu said the police had commenced investigation into the matter and were in the trail of those believed to have played various roles in the crisis.

He warned the people of the area against getting involved in any act that could threaten the peace in the society, stressing that detectives from the State Criminal Investigation Department had been invited to take over the matter.