

# Gunmen kill four grandchildren, nine others in Delta, Rivers

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*Some Niger Delta gunmen*

## ***Friday Amobi and Ovie Okpare***

Unidentified gunmen suspected to be members of a cult on Saturday killed eight people in Omoku town, in the Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area of Rivers State.

This is just as the Idumuje-Ugboko town in the Aniocha North Local Government Area of Delta State was thrown into pandemonium on Sunday following the killing of a woman and four of her grandchildren by gunmen suspected to be hired assassins.

In the Rivers killing, it was gathered that the bandits invaded the community at about 9pm and shot repeatedly, scaring many people away.

The suspected cult members were said to have positioned themselves on three streets in Omoku before opening fire.

A source in the community, said most residents of the area, especially those who fled as a result of a similar invasion in the past, had returned before the latest attack.

The source said, "I was sitting outside with one of my friends when we heard gunshots. People started running helter-skelter. I ran into the gunmen as I fled to my house.

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They put on military uniforms and were armed. They fired from every direction.

103 The morning, I took a walk around the town and I counted seven corpses. Two Hausa men, who might have been hit by stray bullets, were among them. A member of the Joint Security Task Force was also among the dead.

At the moment, we don't know the actual cause of the attack. But we heard that members of a rival cult claimed that the state government settled some groups and abandoned them. They said they would not stop attacking until the government compensated them."

A resident of the area, who claimed to have narrowly escaped death, Chief Ezegohuru Eluozo, said the attack caused panic and disrupted Christmas celebration in Omoku.

However, the Rivers State Police Command said it was not aware of the incident.

The Police Relations Officer of the command, Mr. Nnamdi Omoni, said he would inform our reporter after being briefed by the Divisional Police Officer in the area.

Meanwhile, the Caretaker Committee Chairman of the council, Mr. Osi Olisa, had restricted the operation of commercial motorcyclists in the area.

Olisa in a statement, advised all commercial motorcycle operators to desist from commercial activities between the hours of 7pm and 7am.

In the Delta State tragedy, a woman and four of her grandchildren were killed by gunmen suspected to be assassins on Christmas day.

The incident which occurred in the agrarian community between late Saturday and early hours of Sunday created tension in the area as residents discussed what led to the gruesome killing of the five members of the same family.

Our correspondent gathered that the victims were shot before their apartment was set ablaze by the assailants. Their corpses were said to have been seriously burnt.

A source gave the name of the grandmother as Comfort Ubani, while the names of the four grandchildren, who were between the ages of six and 13, could not be immediately obtained at the time of filing this report.

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President of the community, Benjamin Ogbechie, said the hoodlums struck when the deceased were still sleeping and could not raise the alarm.

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Another source said, "The victims were shot dead by unknown persons, who thereafter gathered their bodies in the sitting room and set them ablaze.

The burnt remains of the grandmother and three of the children were found in the sitting room, while the remains of the fourth child were found in the compound. The cause of the fire has yet to be established, but we saw pieces of clothes forced into their mouths.

The state's Commissioner of Police, Mr. Zanna Ibrahim, visited the scene of the incident and described the incident as pathetic.

He assured the community that the police would apprehend those behind the killings, adding that the matter would not be swept under the carpet.

The Police Public Relations Officer, DSP Andrew Aniamaka, said investigation into matter had begun.

He added that the corpses had been deposited in a morgue in the area.

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