

Suspected cultist shot dead in Cross River

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Cross River State Governor, Prof. Ben Ayade

Ada Wodu, Calabar

A suspected cultist, identified simply as Samuel, was shot dead and his body cut with machetes around 8.30am on Monday in Calabar South, Cross River State, following days of reprisals by members of the *Black Axe* and *Klans*.

It was gathered that the 34-year-old victim, was shot several times and later cut with machetes.

Sources said the incident occurred on Iboku Street in the Calabar South Local Government Area of the state near a barbershop, where the victim had gone to have a haircut.

The victim was suspected to belong to the *Black Axe*, whose members had been clashing with the *Klans* group.

A 60-year-old itinerant food seller, who witnessed the incident, said, “I saw two men jump down from a commercial tricycle; rather than paying the rider, they brought out machetes and handguns.

“They pounced on one of the two men I wanted to sell food to. I abandoned my wares and took to my heels when they used the machetes to smash one of the men’s head. His companion ran away.”

Another eyewitness, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said, “There was a stampede when the two men dressed in black trousers and T-shirts brandished their machetes and guns. They tried to sever Samuel’s head after they had shot and cut him with machetes.

“They were about to completely sever the victim’s head when they fled when they heard police siren and people started shouting from where they were hiding.”

The eyewitness said Samuel, who lived on Idang Street by the Atim Edem Rise Street, was a trader at the Watt Market in Calabar, while his mother is a petty trader in the neighbourhood.

He said policemen from the Mbukpa Division, who arrived the scene after the suspected cultists had fled, evacuated Samuel’s corpse.

When contacted, the state Police Public Relations Officer, DSP Irene Ugbo confirmed the killing.

“They killed somebody. The clash was between members of the Black Axe and the Klans. No arrest has been made, but our men are on the trail of the assailants,” Ugbo stated.

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