

## CITY ROUND

# One killed, others injured in Rivers cult war

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Rivers State Commissioner of Police, Mr Joseph Mukan

## ***Chukwudi Akasike, Port Harcourt***

A suspected cult member who sold tomatoes and identified only as Henry was shot dead in Port Harcourt, the Rivers State capital, on Friday morning by four men belonging to a rival cult group.

The incident, which happened at around 7.45am, caused panic among residents of Bishop Okoye Street, Mile 3, Diobu, as the cult members injured several others and destroyed vehicles parked by the roadside.

Henry, said to be a member of Deygbam cult group, was shot in the head, a development that gave him no chance of survival.

A source in the area told our correspondent that the corpse of the deceased was put in a wheelbarrow by persons suspected to be his friends and wheeled to nearby Chigbu Street.

“Some residents of Chigbo Street, who saw the corpse on their street, decided to leave to avoid being victims of mass arrest by the police. But some persons later called the police, who came and took the corpse away,” the source said.

It was gathered that those who killed Henry were four in number and came in a Toyota saloon car, got to where their target was standing before opening fire on him.

Speaking on the incident, the leader of a vigilance group in Rumuelechi, Godstime Ihunwo, narrated that a group of cult members gunned down a rival cult member, injured several others and destroyed many cars.

Ihunwo explained that the opposing cult members came out in a large number with arms.

He said, “A group of cult members came out from a Toyota Camry and shot a suspected Deygbam boy in his head and he died. When I heard it, I immediately called the Divisional Police Officer of Nkpolu Police Division.

“The incident caused men and women to run helter-skelter in the area. A group of cult members invaded the area. They were about 200 in number, destroying people’s cars and chasing people away.”

Ihunwo said the presence of policemen at a checkpoint did not scare the cult members, who injured some members of a vigilance group.

“When we told the Deygbam boys to sheathe their swords, they attacked my men and injured some of us. My men and I were injured in front of the fully armed policemen. But nobody was arrested.

“They (cult members) left with a threat that they must kill me and my men in replacement of their own member that was killed,” Ihunwo added.

When contacted, the state Police Public Relations Officer, Nnamdi Omoni, confirmed the incident and added that the state Police Commissioner, Joseph Mukan, had ordered a thorough investigation into the matter.

“The person that was killed has been identified as Henry. He was shot this morning (Friday) by gunmen. He sold tomatoes at Mile 3. The CP has ordered an investigation into the incident to unravel identities of the killers and bring them to justice.

“The corpse has been evacuated this morning (Friday) and taken to the mortuary. We are assuring residents of the area that the police will sustain the normalcy that has been restored,” Omoni added.

A cult war between suspected Deygbam and Iceland groups in Mile 3, Diobu over ‘matching ground’ market fee had earlier claimed two lives within the past two weeks. One Chisco Uzoma, a suspected Iceland cult member, and one Saidu Waisu, a suspected Deygbam cult member, were killed.