

One killed as cultists clash in Delta community

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One person was feared dead, while many others sustained varying degrees of injury and no fewer than four buildings were razed down by rival cult members in Oteri community, Ughelli North Local Government Area of Delta State.

Oteri, an agrarian community, is the hometown of the immediate past Secretary to the Delta State Government, Festus Agas.

Eyewitnesses said trouble started on Sunday around 6.50pm when one Oghenero Oke, aka Last Card, was shot dead by gunmen believed to be members of the *Aye* Confraternity allegedly led by one Ejiata Elohor.

It was gathered that the deceased, said to be a member of the *Mafia* Confraternity and also an indigene of the community, had an altercation with Elohor, alleged to be the leader of the rival *Aye* Confraternity in the area.

The altercation, according to sources, was in connection with a relationship the deceased had with Elohor's elder sister, which turned sour.

It was gathered that the altercation became uncontrollable and subsequently turned violent.

In the ensuing commotion, a house and shop belonging to Elohor's parents were reportedly set ablaze by irate community youths sympathetic to Oghenero's cause.

In retaliation Oghenero was allegedly shot dead by a cult member loyal to Elohor.

Community sources hinted that members of the *Aye* Confraternity had been having a running battle with the *Aro Baggers* Confraternity, adding that Oghenero's murder might snowball into a big battle between the rival groups.

Meanwhile, Oghenero's corpse has been deposited in the morgue of the Central Hospital, Ughelli, while one of those who sustained severe injuries is currently receiving treatment at the Ufor Hospital.

A source, who spoke to journalists on condition of anonymity, fingered a notable youth and a member of the vigilante group in the area as leading the gang of cultists, who set ablaze the building belonging to the father of a former Resident Electoral Commissioner in the old Bendel State, Chief Atuyota Ejughemre.

The fear of possible reprisal was heightened in the community on Tuesday as security operatives were seen patrolling the streets.

The state Police Public Relations Officer, DSP Onome Onovwakpoyeya, confirmed the incident but denied the burning of houses.

“Yes, one person was killed but no house was burnt, according to the DPO in Ughelli. Right now, there is intensive police patrol at Ughelli,” she stated.

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