

**METRO PLUS**

# Police plead for calm as cultists kill Enugu town union leader

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The Enugu State Police Command has appealed to law-abiding residents of Oruku community to remain calm, while it hunts the killers of their town union Vice Chairman, Samuel Ani, who was shot dead at his residence.

The command, in a statement by Daniel Ndukwe, regretted the callous and brutal killing of Ani by those it said should have protected him if he was being attacked.

The statement read in part, “The command received an incident report that on February 24, 2021 around 7.30am, hoodlums suspected to be among the warring factions in Oruku community shot and murdered one Samuel Ani at his residence in the community.

“However, the Commissioner of Police, Mohammed Aliyu, has enjoined law-abiding residents of the community to remain calm, while the police intensify efforts to fish out and bring the perpetrators to justice.”

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Some residents of Oruku community in the Nkanu East Local Government Area of the state condemned the state government’s inaction for the crisis that is bedevilling the area, which resulted in the killing of the Vice Chairman of the Oruku Town Union Caretaker Committee, Chief Samuel Ani, by gunmen suspected to be cultists.

The community blamed the killing, continued burning of houses and destruction of property in the community since December 26, 2020 on Governor Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi’s inaction and betrayal.

They said the governor brought them out in the name of making peace and abandoned them half-way to be slaughtered without doing anything about their predicament.

This is coming barely two months after the traditional ruler of the community, Igwe Emmanuel Mbah, was shot dead by policemen from the Force Headquarters while addressing members of his community during their annual general meeting on December 26, 2020.

His killing, which was blamed on some members of the community, who allegedly conspired with the police, sparked reactions leading to the burning of 77 houses and the only market in the community.

It was gathered that since then, heavy shooting had been going on in the community despite the fact that a detachment of policemen was stationed in the community to forestall further killings and burning of houses.

A community member, Mr Agozie Anih, who spoke to our correspondent on the development, said Ani was shot dead in his house on Wednesday.

He stated, “There was heavy shooting throughout the night. The policemen deployed to maintain peace were nowhere to be found.

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“This morning (Wednesday), Chief Samuel Ani of the Oruku Caretaker Committee was shot dead in his home.

“The assailants are the same boys, who have been camping at Aguikpa, a neighbouring community and whom we have been complaining about and nothing was done about it. They have been attacking Oruku community every single day from that location. They call on the phone, tell the people in the village that they are coming and they do come. Two weeks ago, they started calling that they must kill somebody. That somebody must go down and now this morning, they carried out their death threat.”

When asked if the incident was reported to the police, Anih stated, “Of course, it was reported to the government and the police, but nothing was done about it. The number of the policemen posted to Oruku went down from 36 to six and the six leave the community by 5.30pm and returned by 6.30am or 7am.

“That’s what they have been doing since. Now, this man, a member of the caretaker committee set up by the government, has been killed. He was not a young man that you will say that he was taking part in anything; he was over 60-year-old. They just went to his house and killed him.”

Asked if the people causing the mayhem were untouchable, Anih said, “Ask that from the government. We know where these hoodlums are. How many petitions have the community written?

“Three days ago, there was an incident at Aguikpa; an Oruku man went to drop somebody at Aguikpa and the boys cornered him and wanted to take him somewhere to kill him, he resisted and struggled with them.”

He claimed that the government knew the people causing the mayhem and blamed the governor for allegedly refusing to do anything about the situation in the community.

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Anih added, “The governor can stop them but he doesn’t want to. He wants to be in good terms with everybody.

“The farm of the former Chairman of the Nkanu East Local Government Council, Mr Ejike Ani, was attacked and burnt by the same criminals and nothing was done.”

The Chairman, Oruku Neighbourhood Watch, Mr Emmanuel Ani, corroborated Anih’s claims.

He said, “The same group of cultists, who were hired by some notable people in the community and who don’t want the over 30-year-old war between Oruku and Umuode to stop, this morning killed the Vice Chairman of the Oruku Caretaker Committee in his house.

“We are coming to Enugu now to deposit his body in the mortuary.”

*PUNCH Metro* gathered that the killing might not be unconnected to the ongoing sitting of the judicial panel of inquiry set up by government to probe the killing of the Oruku traditional ruler.

Sources disclosed that the town union was billed to make its presentation at the panel today (Thursday).

The state Commissioner for Information, Mr Chidi Aroh, when contacted on the accusation of inaction against the government, he said it was not true.

“This government set up a judicial commission of inquiry on the killing of their traditional ruler, Igwe Emmanuel Mbah, and the panel is yet to conclude its investigation. So, what do they want the governor to do?” he asked.

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