

Gunmen kill three, abduct two in Rivers community

Dennis Naku, Port Harcourt

NO fewer than three persons were killed while two others were abducted when gunmen suspected to be cultists invaded the Ubeta community in the Ahoada West Local Government Area of Rivers State on Wednesday.

The gunmen reportedly ransacked the community in what appeared to be a reprisal.

They were said to have earlier stormed the same community on Tuesday and abducted two shop owners.

The paramount ruler of the community, Chief Million Jonathan, confirmed the incident to journalists in a telephone interview on Thursday.

Jonathan gave the name of one of the kidnapped shop owners as Chimezie Nebu, even as he expressed worry over their health and safety, especially as the hoodlums had yet to contact any of their families three days after they were taken.

The monarch said the attacks had been recurring in the community without any effort by the government or security operatives.

He said, "I was at home when the news came in the morning that three boys were killed. I have investigated and up till now, I don't know those who did it. According to the information I received, some of them (deceased) are cultists. Three of them were killed but I don't know what led to the killing.

"Three days ago, they kidnapped two people who have shops close to each other. They were in their shops selling when these bad boys with guns came that evening and kidnapped them. Up till now, we don't know if they are dead or still alive. One of the shop owners is Chimezie Nebu."

Asked if he had reported the matter to the police, the monarch said he directed the Chairman of the Community Development Committee who was in Port Harcourt at the time to do so.

He solicited the intervention of the government to put an end to the repeated killings



• Rivers CP, Okon Effiong

and criminal activities in his community.

"I want the government to come to our aid so that all these killings and kidnappings will stop. These things (activities) have been going on for years now.

"These boys (hoodlums) took oath sometime and we didn't hear much of these killings again. I don't know why they have started now," he said.

Continuing, the distraught monarch said, "People in most of our communities here, not only Ubeta, have run away because these boys usually operate at night; ransack the communities, shoot and so on.

"Most of our people can no longer endure the situation because they break into peoples' houses and steal their properties."

When contacted, the spokesperson for the state police command, Grace Iringekoko, a Superintendent of Police, said no official report had been made to the police on the incident.

"The command has not received any official report on it. But I spoke with the Divisional Police Officer who told me the people said they were coming to his office over the incident.

"It is important that when such things happen, let the community make an official report to the nearest police station in their domain so that action can be taken immediately," she advised.

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