

Gunmen kill seven Imo village heads

OLAJIDE OMOJOLOMOJU

TRAGEDY struck again in Imo State on Saturday evening when some gunmen reportedly shot dead the President-General of Umucheke Okwe autonomous community in Onuimo Local Government Area of Imo State, Hyginus Obazurike.

Six village heads from the autonomous community were also allegedly killed by the gunmen.

An indigene of the community, who pleaded anonymity, told Sunday PUNCH that the gunmen, who operated in a vehicle, struck while the victims were having a meeting in the community.

The source said, "Some gunmen have just shot dead the President-General of Umucheke Okwe autonomous community and six village heads.

"The PG and the village heads were having a meeting at the PG's shop, located at the community's market when the attackers arrived.

"On arrival, the gunmen opened fire, killed all the community leaders, and set the place ablaze. All the community chiefs died in the attack."

Visibly apprehensive, the source added that nobody knew the reason for the attack.

He added, "Nobody knew the agenda of the meeting. They were having a meeting at the PG's shop when the gunmen arrived. They opened fire, killed all the village chiefs in attendance, and burnt the place before driving off."

Sunday PUNCH reports that following the dastardly act, residents of the village have fled their homes.

The sole administrator of the local government area, Emeka Obi, who confirmed the killings when contacted, said he was addressing his constituents.

Condemning the killings, he urged everybody to remain calm.

Imo State Police Command's spokesperson, Henry Okoye, had yet to respond to our correspondent's enquiry as of the time of filing this report.

Recall that some gunmen had in the past killed a ward chairman of the All Progressives Congress and seven others in the same community.

Last week, beginning from Monday, some gunmen killed four policemen and a Point of Sale operator at Irette community, located on the Owerri - Onitsha expressway in Owerri, the state capital.

Also on Monday, some gunmen

killed one person and set a vehicle ablaze when they attacked Umuelemai junction at Isiala Mbano Local Government Area of the state.

The following day, on Tuesday, some gunmen killed a businessman, Okey Nze, popularly known as Wealthy Empire, at Amawire junction in Orji community, in the Owerri North Local Government Area of the state.

On the same day, a policeman identified as OC Irezor was shot dead by gunmen, alongside a community chief, Paulinus Mbakwe, at Nworieubi community in the Mbaitoli Local Government Area of the state.

Fubara urges LG chairmen to empower residents

DENNIS NAKU

Rivers State Governor Siminalayi Fubara has read the Riot act to caretaker committee chairmen in the 23 local government areas of the state, saying any one of them that fail to empower his/her people will be removed.

Fubara handed down the warning at the unveiling of an empowerment

programme in Ikwerre Local Government Area of the state on Saturday.

He emphasised that the primary duty of the CTC chairmen is to serve their people and make them feel the presence of government.

Represented by the Speaker of the State House of Assembly loyal to him, Victor Oko-Jumbo, Fubara said he expects the council chairmen to

replicate what he is doing in terms of empowerment in their various LGAs.

He said, "Any caretaker Committee Chairman that is not empowering his people, we will remove that person. Your duty is for your people first, it is to your people. Today, we are here to witness that empowerment which was the instruction the governor gave."