

Stray bullet kills woman in Bayelsa cult clash

5th February 2025

By Samuel Ese



A woman simply identified as Onorakpoma has been killed by a stray bullet fired during a cult clash between the Bobous and Greenlanders in Swali Ultra Modern Market, Yenagoa.

Onorakpoma who hailed from Emede community in Isoko South Local Government Area of Delta State was until her death a trader in the market.

PUNCH Metro gathered that the victim was being rushed to a community somewhere in Southern Ijaw Local Government Area where the slug was to be removed when she died on Monday.

The incident again highlighted the need for improved security measures around the slaughter area of the market to avert further loss of lives.

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When our correspondent visited the area on Tuesday morning, nearly all the shops in the Slaughter Road area of the market were shut allegedly on the orders of some security operatives.

However, as the day wore on, traders slowly began to open their shops and display their wares.

The operatives were said to be concerned that the traders were not informing them of cult-related activities in the area only to learn of the death.

However, members of the Isoko community in Bayelsa State have expressed concerns as according to them, the police have stopped family members from taking the corpse for burial.

A source at the market told PUNCH Metro that while struggling for life, Onorakpoma had instructed those around her not to take her to any mortuary, but to bury her immediately if she died.

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The source said, “On the fateful Monday, a cult member of northern extraction had met his former boss, a member of a rival cult group, to ask for financial assistance.

“His boss said he had no money, but as the other was going back, he was confronted by other members of the rival cult group who shot at him.

“The shot hit his arm and ricocheted, hitting the woman in a critical area and she was immediately rushed to somewhere in Southern Ijaw Local Government Area, but died on the way.”

The President of Isoko Development Union in the state, Mr Godstime Ohigbo, said he did not understand why the police were guarding the corpse and not allowing the deceased’s family to take her for burial.

“As I speak with you, we are at the State CID. The corpse is at her residence and it’s being guarded by the police,” he stated.

When contacted about the development, the Bayelsa State Police Public Relations Officer, Mr Musa Mohammed, said that after getting the information, they immediately swung into action.

Mohammed said calm was restored in the Swali community as three suspects had been arrested in connection with the incident.

“Immediately the police were alerted, the CP deployed tactical teams to the Swali community, and calm was restored. Three members of the cult group have been arrested.”

On the issue of denial of the family the right to take the corpse away for burial, he said, “You know when things like this happen, the police will investigate. It is after investigations that she will be taken to the mortuary.”