

House urges IGP to probe cult killings in Imo

•Wades into Nigeria's suspension by FIFA

FROM IHEANACHO NWOSU, ABUJA

The House of Representatives yesterday asked Inspector-General of Police (IGP), Mohammed Abubakar to probe the killing of civilians by suspected cult groups in Egbema, Imo State.

Besides, the chamber directed the IGP and other relevant security agencies to immediately provide enough personnel in strategic locations in the community.

The directive was given at a plenary following a motion moved by Hon. Gerald Irona (PDP-Imo). The motion was unanimously adopted without debate.

The lawmakers also urged the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) to urgently provide relief materials to the displaced and victims of the attacks.

The lawmakers said the attacks which were carried out at communities by suspected cult groups were condemnable and should be investigated. Giving insight into what transpired, Irona said suspected cultists on July 9, invaded Ukkwugba in Obiakpu, Egbema clan and killed two persons.

According to him, on July 13, a rival cult group retaliated by invading Obiakpu main town and killed four innocent persons including a community leader. He recalled that the same cult group had killed over 40 people between January 2012 and June 2014.

The lawmaker, who said it was time security operatives turned their searchlight on the alleged cultists, noted that during the attack, several persons were abducted and taken hostage.

He cautioned that treating the matter with kids' gloves could lead to the attacks spreading to other neighbouring villages. He said that the cult groups who operated with sophisticated weapons were dressed in military camouflage.

In another development, the House has mandated Sports Minister Tamuno Danagogo and Director-General of the National Sports Commission (NSC), Gbenga Elegbeleye to summon stakeholders to avoid the banning of Nigeria by the Federation of International Football Association (FIFA).

The House said Dr Danagogo should ensure that he summons all the parties involved with a view to resolving the matter soon.

The lawmakers who adopted a motion by Hon Muhammed Ali Wudil, described Nigeria's suspension by FIFA as unfortunate. The motion was titled: "Suspension of the Nigerian Football Federation (NFF) by the Federation of International Football Association (FIFA)". Wudil noted that the ban, if not reversed, "would mean that no team or clubside from Nigeria can have any international sporting contacts with teams or clubside from any other country," adding that it would deprive the country of representation in any regional, continental or international competitions.

He said the ban would have adverse effects on the careers of Nigerian footballers and the consequent loss by the nation generally, saying "neither the NFF nor any of its members or officials would benefit from any FIFA or CAF development programmes."

Most lawmakers who supported the motion said immediate action must be taken.



Speaker Aminu Tambuwal