

# INSIGHT

By Henry Umahi and Sunday Ani

**THESE** are, certainly, not the best of times for students of the Abia State University (ABSU), Uturu, and residents of the community. Last week, heads practically rolled in the community, as four students were beheaded by suspected cultists in their off-campus residence.

According to a report, two of "the victims identified as Chukwuebuka Nwaigbo, 300-level, Estate Management, and Samuel Nwokolo, 300-level, Political Science students were murdered in their apartment at Chidoo Lodge, near the school gate."

During the attack, some students were seriously wounded, including Ummasoro ThankGod, a 300-level Political Science student, whose hands were severed with cutlass by the assailants.

## Cultists at war

The deaths resulted from supremacy war between rival cult groups, namely Burkinafaso and Mafia. It was gathered that an alleged member of Mafia, Collins Agwu, a Microbiology student, was killed by suspected members of Burkinafaso three weeks ago. So, in retaliation and to appease the spirit of their beloved departed member, the Mafia killed Nwaigbo, Nwokolo and others.

It was learnt that the severed heads of the students were used as goalposts at a field, even as the rival group has vowed to behead 21 fresh human heads before they will be satisfied. Recall that not too long ago, some students of ABSU gang raped a lady, videotaped the despicable act and uploaded same on the Internet.

In the same vein, several people have been shot and beheaded in Rivers State. While the PDP insisted that the killings were gang-related, the APC maintained that they were politically motivated. Whether gang-related or politically motivated, an indisputable fact is that blood has been flowing like a river in Rivers State in the last couple of weeks.

Consider these: A chieftain of the APC, Franklin Obi, his wife and 18-year old son, Bestman, were gruesomely murdered in Omoku recently. According to Obi's 16-year-old daughter, who witnessed the killing of her father, mother and elder brother: "I was inside when I heard my mum crying. We heard the sound of gunshot somewhere in the room. I opened the curtain of my room and I saw the men, cutting off my father's head. They then came to our room and ordered me and my brother to come out and as we were coming, my brother was moving slowly and they shot him. They then left with my father's head."

In Buguma, Mr. Ofinijite Amachree was roasted alive like a sacrifice for the gods. And, ac-

cording to the Rivers State PDP Chairman, Felix Obuah, Mr. Isaac Ikechukwu Chinedu, the party's chairman in Obite and Mr. Chinedu Saidey, the Ward 9 Assistant Secretary from Oboburu were gruesomely murdered recently. In the case of Mr. Pabby Koryene, he was buried alive while Messrs Gabriel Cookey and Tubotamuno Wariso, said to be an APC member in Opobo, were beaten to death. Four others were sent to early graves in Obibi, Etche.

About two weeks before Obi was beheaded, armed men laid siege to Umoku, headquarters of Ogba/Ndoni/Egbema (ONELGA) for several hours. They left behind several decapitated bodies. A source disclosed that over 400 persons, mainly youths have been killed in ONELGA since 2013.

During the last Christmas and New Year celebrations, Ubima community in Ikwerre LGA of Rivers State was a ghost town as two cult groups - Icelanders and Deygbam - flexed muscle. Several deaths were recorded on both sides even as innocent people were caught in the crossfire. Ubima is the home town of former governors Celestine Omechia and Rotimi Amaechi.

Although Rivers State has remained a theatre of gangsterism and violence but the actors have raised the bar in terms of savagery, barbarism and brutality. People are easily killed and dismembered like animals and it is almost a daily occurrence.

Offering insight into the spate of killings in Rivers State, Dr. Sofiri Peterside, who teaches sociology at the University of Port Harcourt, said: "There are several factors responsible for that. First, it is a clear demonstration that the amnesty programme failed to actually mop up guns in circulation because wherever you see that kind of programme in place, there must be a mechanism and a framework for mopping up small arms and large weapons in circulation. But with the resurgence of violence, it just shows that the amnesty programme failed in that respect of mopping up guns in circulation."

Indeed, cultists are on rampage in virtually every part of the country. And whenever rival cult groups clash, blood will flow. War zones have emerged in virtually every part of the country.

Without qualms, Kazeem Tiamiyu, a 23-year old member of the Neo Black Movement of Africa, otherwise known as Aiyé Confraternity, recently that his group has killed 15 persons in various parts of Ogun State.

Tiamiyan, "the butcher", also confessed selling guns to cultists at Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagun, and Abraham Adesanya Polytechnic, Ijebu Igbo.

## Ritual killings, etc.

It could be said that life has become two for a penny in the country. Put differently, life has lost its sanctity in these climes. Bloodletting is not a prerogative of cultists. There are mob attacks, ritual killings, communal clashes and sundry killing spree. Some of the reasons for the killings are as ridiculous as they are nasty. Some of the bloody enterprises sound like tales told in the world of Nollywood.

Last December, 22-year-old Precious Naza



• Okonkwo

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Save Agatu, Idoma Initiative protest in Abuja

# NIGERIA: KILLING F

## • Why blood is flowing

Onyenanu, who read Education (Economics) at the Imo State University, was allegedly butchered by her boyfriend, Ephraim Isom (27). It is suspected that the loverboy slit her throat because he suspected that she was about to dump him.

In February, 23-year-old Nkefre Archibong allegedly beat his father to death with firewood in Ibesikpo Asutan. The senior Archibong died for beating his wife, Nkefre's mother. In the manner of jailed Rev. King, a prophet of the Celestial Church of Christ (CCC) on Unity Street, in Abule Egba, Lagos, recently set a church member ablaze during service.

The victim, Madam Bosede, said: "Our prophet said the spirit of God whispered to him that I would not be burnt if he set me on fire. When I came out, they poured kerosene on my body and set me ablaze. But, unfortunately, I was burnt beyond recognition and before other church members could get water, the deed had already been done."

Forty-two-year old Samuel Omosaba from Ikare-Akoko in Akoko North East LGA of Ondo State beheaded his three-year-old niece for money ritual. Henry Uwadiogwu, 25, murdered his lover, Mrs. Helen Peters, a married woman at Gowon Estate, Lagos. It was gathered that his intention was to abduct the woman and demand ransom from her husband but the plan went awry,

as she died following an over dose of drugs he injected her with.

On March 8, Edet Umoren, a teacher in a private school in Ijebu East LGA of Ogun State, beheaded one of his pupils, 10-year-old Precious Adedeji. The 52-year old Umoren, who hails from Akwa Ibom State, claimed that the victim and the wife of the proprietor of the school provoked him.

The clash between members of the Shiite sect and the military in January left a long trail of blood, tears and sorrow. The Shiite sect claimed that 1000 of their members were killed in the clash. About two weeks ago, there was a clash at Mile 12 market during which many lives were lost.

## Fulani herdsmen

Apart from Boko Haram, the biggest merchants of death in the country are the ubiquitous Fulani herdsmen. Blood-thirsty, they tyrannise villagers with their sophisticated weapons. As a matter of fact, the Fulani herdsmen are on rampage, stealing, raping, killing and maiming with reckless abandon.

Recently, the Fulani herdsmen invaded Agatu LGA in Benue State and killed about 500 people while rendering thousands homeless. However, the herdsmen claimed that their cattle were killed in Agatu hence they spared no one in sight.

During a visit to the trouble area, former Senate President David Mark, lamented the wanton killings and destruction of property. He said: "I'm shocked beyond words at the extent of destruction I have seen here in Agatu today. It is