



From **Layi Olanrewaju**, Ilorin

FOR sometime now, residents of Ilorin, Kwara State, have become apprehensive over the new trend of cult related killings and attacks. The ugly trend and its consequences have almost turned the city to a theatre of war.

In recent times, there has been growing concern over reported cases of cult related killings in some parts of the city. Those fingered so far in the heinous act were rival cult groups whose operations have been curtailed by management of higher institutions in the state. They now see a safe haven in the city. They traced their victims to the town and pronounced death sentence on them. Male members of either group are usually the targets.

Since the beginning of this year their op-

erations have recorded an increase attack. In March for instance, no fewer than eight persons were reportedly killed in a three-day onslaughts that ensued between two rival cult groups.

The attacks, Daily Sun gathered, claimed the lives in Oyun, Ikokoro, Osere, Olunlade, Niger, Kilanko, Olufadi, Egebejila and Ita-Ogunbo areas of Ilorin. The killings, except two, were said to have been carried out in broad daylight.

Residents of Ikokoro where the killings started, recounted the gory picture of how suspected rival cult members stormed the area by 2:45p.m., chased after their target and shot him dead in an apartment where he had sought refuge.

Similar incident occurred in Edun/Opo-Malu Junction where suspected rival cultists renewed their hostility killing one person in the process. The victim, identified as Dauda, was gruesomely killed leading to palpable fear among residents and shop owners in the area.

He was said to be a dealer in furniture and interior decorations at a fairly used market near the junction. It was, however, learnt that the atmosphere became charged immediately members of the rival cult groups arrived the shop of the deceased.

Dauda was said to have taken to his heels when he sighted the dreaded group but was given a hot chase and was eventually caught at the junction where several machet cuts were dealt on him. Other shop owners scampered

for safety as the cultists reportedly brandished harmful objects including guns and machetes. The warring cult groups left the scene of the incident immediately their victim was confirmed dead.

In the first 10 days of this month more cases were reported. For example, five members of a suspected cult group killed a cigarette marketer in Gaa Akanbi area of the town. Residents in the area now live in fear and deserted their homes over the development even as the police were reportedly searching for the suspects.

The cigarette seller, popularly called MM was shot in the head by one of the suspected cultists and died instantly. It was gathered that the cult gang had stormed the shop to buy ciga-