

# Protest as gunmen kill 7 wedding guests in Imo

Community accuses vigilance group

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From George Onyejiuwa, *Owerri*

**A protest erupted on Monday following the killing of seven youths from Otulu community in Oru East Council Area of Imo State by gunmen.**

The President General of the community has accused the operatives of Ebebuagu, the Imo State Government's vigilante outfit, as responsible for the killings.

It was learnt that the incident which happened on Sunday had put the had thrown the Otulu community into mourning and palpable fear.

The victims were said to have been returning to their community in Otulu in Our East Local Government Area of the state from Awomama in the neighbouring Oru West LGA before the Ebebagu operatives opened fire on them, killing seven of the wedding guests.

The President General of Otulu community, Nnamdi Agbor, who spoke to our correspondent, said that seven persons died on the spot.

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According to him, "Our people were coming back from Awo Omamma around 7 pm after a traditional wedding. Ebube Agu operatives saw them in motorcycles and opened fire on them. As I speak to you, we have recovered seven dead bodies who are our people. Five are still missing. Two are critically injured and hospitalized while the other person who sustained a minor injury has been discharged.

Continuing, he said: "This is very unfortunate. Our people are angry. They are protesting. There was no cause for the killing. They were just riding home when the Ebubeagu Security outfit opened fire on them. This has never happened before.

"We have reported the incident to the security agents. The commissioner of police and the commander of the 34 artillery Brigade command Obinze have visited. The DPO is also assisting. I have reported the killing to the member representing us in the parliament.

"The celebrant is Chijioke Nnanna. Those arrested are Uchenna Orjiribeka, Chido Ekesinachi and Nnamdi Ekesinachi. Those in the hospital are Oluebube Agbor and Thank God Iheukwumere. Those who were killed are, Chigozie Obinwa, Ozioma, Chikere Anyadioha, Ifechi Ekesinachi, Emeka Ekesinachi, Aboy Ihegboro and Chijindu. Five persons are still missing."

The spokesperson of the Imo State Police Command, CSP Micheal Abattam, confirmed the incident and disclosed that an investigation had commenced.