

Cult supremacy war

■ YABATECH battles cultism, arrests student suspects

By Gabriel Dike

THERE is tension in Yaba College of Technology (YABATECH), Lagos. Reason: Cult killings on campus remain unchecked. When *The Education Report* visited YABATECH, there was an uneasy calm on the campus. Students and staff were in groups discussing the development in hushed tones.

The school management described the killings as unfortunate. Students said the cult clashes have become a supremacy fight between two groups. They also said the surge in the killings was "due to a lack of security on the campus."

More than five students have lost their lives to the violent cult clashes. But school authorities confirmed three students dead in cult-related clashes on the campus.

Recent killings
Students said between August and November 2022, cultists killed five students, but the management differed. It insisted three were killed within that period.

Way back in August 2014, the college expelled some students for cult-related activities. Two of the expelled students alleged that top management staff were members of the various cult groups on campus.

Eight years after, with the recent cult clashes on campus, some students are still pointing the finger at some senior management staff.

One of the students (names withheld), asked: "How many have been arrested, faced panel and sanctioned in the last three years? Tell them to show

you proof of students being expelled. All we hear is that they are facing the panel."

A female HND 1 student in Accounting alleged: "Since the beginning of this year, it has been one cult clash or another, with heavy casualties. We are living in fear and nobody is safe on campus. Why is YABATECH suddenly the venue for attacks? Many students have been killed because of the battle for supremacy in the college."

"Aside from the last incident in November, in which one suspect was apprehended, other ones, the killers managed to escape. The college management should

beef up security on the campus."

Students killed included Bello Akerodele Adisa, HND II, Art and Design. He was killed in September 2022. Kunle, class representative, Department of Quantity Survey, was shot dead at the Sports Complex. In November, an arrested cultist gunned down an ex-student.

Investigations revealed that the recent clash was between Eiyi Confraternity and Buccaneers. The clash led to the death of five students, whereas the school management insisted three students were killed.

SUG's reaction

President, Students Union Government (SUG), Ayomide Taiwo, told *The Education Report*: "We do our best to inform the college management of what is happening on campus. The management is responsible for security on campus. Plans are underway to install CCTV cameras on campus."

"Those attacking one another, students should refrain from cultism and avoid wrong gatherings or clandestine associations."

He disclosed that the victim killed on November 15, 2022, was an ex-student. "One of the suspects was arrested and handed over to

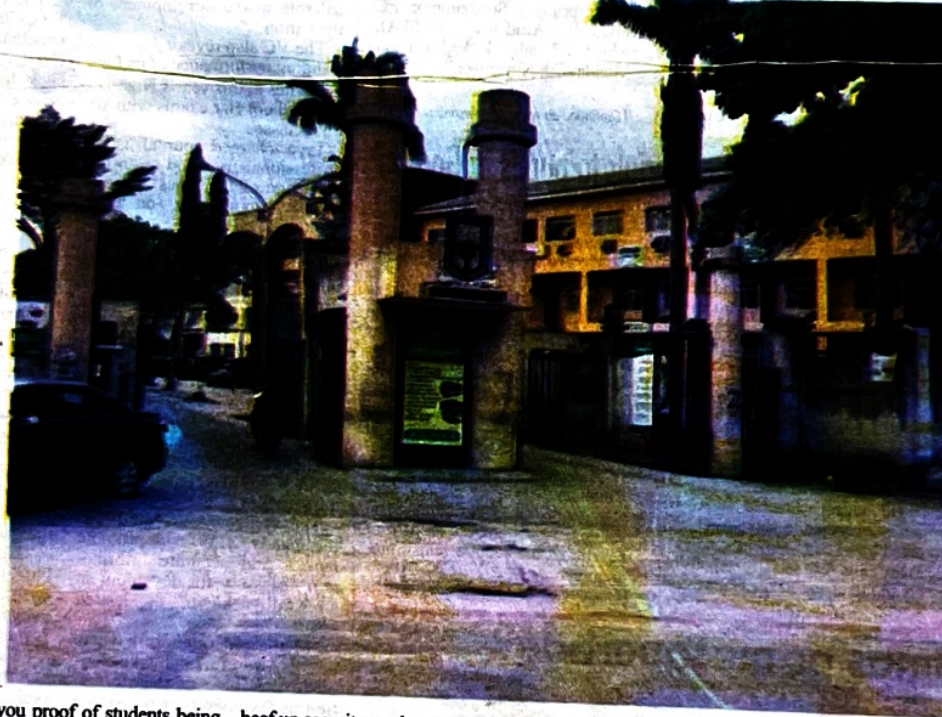
the police."

On why no student has been sanctioned for cultism, he said, "The management insists the matter is a security issue that is still under investigation."

Taiwo said the management promised to improve security and install CCTV cameras on campus.

Management's reaction

Deputy Registrar (Information), Mr. Joe Ejiofor, maintained that, "Security has not collapsed in the college, it is intact. What happened was an unfortunate incident. We have a good working relationship with the police."



"The victim of the November killing was not a student of the college. I suspect an issue happened outside the college and the cultists trailed him to YABATECH and killed him. The killer was arrested and is answering questions with the police."

Three students were killed in August, September and November. Of course, the three students killed were on the higher side. The college has zero tolerance for cultism. The management has put security measures in place to forestall incidents like this from happening.

"I don't know how many students are facing panels or have been sanctioned for cultism. We have a students' disciplinary committee that handles cult cases and other vices. But some students are facing the panel."

"Management has tried to allay students' fears. They were also told about implications of joining cults. The Students Affairs Unit has a counselling section that educates them on such vices."

"Nobody wants to see students killed. Sometimes, these cultists enter campus, kill students and escape. No responsible management will allow its students to be killed."

Dean, Students Affairs and Chief Lecturer in Urban and Regional Planning, Mr. O.R. Balogun, declined to speak, but he volunteered that "the college has a unit that is in charge of relating with the media. My office is purely for student-related issues. I will advise you to go and see our public relations people."