

Gunmen kill youth leader in Rivers

5th May 2023



From **Tony John**, Port Harcourt

Gunmen suspected to be cultists, on Wednesday night, shot dead Mr. Ebenezer Matthew, President of the Abarikpo community in Akoh Kingdom, Ahoada East Local Government Area of Rivers State.

The killing came less than three months after gunmen suspected to be cultists gang-raped Mrs. Chigbewejim Lawyer, the wife of Pastor Lawyer Steward, to death in the community.

The Public Relations Officer of Akoh Youth Congress, Ekeakita Chinem, described the deceased as someone who hated illegality.

Chinem said: “Yes, it’s true that Comrade Matthew Ebenezer was shot dead yesterday night in his hometown, at his father’s compound. The only thing I know about Matthew is that he was not somebody that condoned illegality.

“He was somebody that stood firm, fought against cultists and insecurity in the community. And I believe that is one of the two things that might have led to his death. But, I know he was a good person in the Akoh Kingdom. Yes, the matter has been reported to the police. As I am speaking to you now, they are preparing for his burial.

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“The insecurity in Ekpeye communities has turned to a usual church praise when you talk of killings in Ekpeye, both Ahoada East and Ahoada West. It has become a usual praise. Everyday, people do not sleep with their two eyes closed. Everyday, we record killings. As of last month, April, we had about 36 recorded. In Ekpeye ethnic nationality, we have six clans known as kingdoms.

“The ones we recorded, Ubie has the highest, about 16 (deaths). We have Ahoada, six; we have Akoh three, and machines (motorcycles) stolen. We record daily robberies at Odiemenyi road.

I am calling on the security agencies and the political leaders to beef up security in Ekpeye land and not to just stay and allow poor masses to die.”

He called on the Divisional Police Officer (DPO, Commander, Joint Task Force (JTF), and the two local government chairmen of Ahoada East and Ahoada West, as well as the paramount rulers to come to the aid of the poor in Ekpeye land before the killing turns to the 2016 matter.

The state Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Grace Iringe-Koko, who confirmed the incident to journalists, said it was not a cult clash and that the police had identified the person who led the gang that killed the youth leader; but the kingpin and other culprits were yet to be arrested.

The command's spokesperson added that efforts were on to arrest the culprits, while investigation continues.