

# Cultists molest, kill young girls

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PORT HARCOURT

**S**uspected cult members have murdered two young girls in Ubie Clan, Ekpeye in Ahoada West Local Government Area of Rivers State, throwing the area into panic.

The hoodlums were said to have molested the girls, Miss Chipkebi Samuel (15) and Miss Uwoh Nelson (12), before strangulating them and fleeing into the bush.

Cult-related violence is not uncommon in many communities in Ahoada West Local Government. Cult clashes claimed scores of lives early this year, as rival cult groups carried out indiscriminate attacks in several communities.

Sources said that the bodies of the girls were discovered in a nearby bush where nobody expected to find them after they had been declared missing a week earlier.

They said that various search parties had been dispatched within one week to comb the

bush, while others had gone to the town, until a palm fruit cutter spotted their bodies and alerted the community.

The palm fruit cutter was said to have found the girls with their mouths gagged with pieces of their clothes, while their handbags were placed by their sides.

Efforts to trace the killing to any of the cult groups operating in the area have proved abortive, since none of them has claimed responsibility for it.

While one the girls has been buried after disagreements on issues bordering on tradition, the body of the second girl, according to the source, has not been buried.

Efforts to get a confirmation of the crime from the state Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Nnamdi Omoni, were unsuccessful, as he said he was in a meeting.

He, however, neither picked calls later put across to his mobile line nor responded to a text message.

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