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ABAKALIKI

Fear yesterday gripped residents of Afikpo in Afikpo North Local Government Area of Ebonyi State when an explosion killed a man suspected to be a suicide bomber.

The incident, which occurred opposite Amaizu Amangbala Primary School in Afikpo, caused panic in the area as people scampered for safety.

But the police said the man killed in the explosion was not a suicide bomber but an inspector attached to Mopol 32, Abakaliki, who was on a special duty in Afikpo.

This occurred as the state government yesterday banned procession and mass gathering in the state. It also banned movement into and out of the state from 8pm.

A resident of Afikpo, who did not want his name in print, told our correspondent that the incident occurred about noon when the man tried to gain access into a school.

"He made an attempt to enter Amaizu Amangbala Primary School but was turned back by the school security men since he couldn't justify his reason for visiting. He immediately started running inside a nearby bush when a big bang was heard," the resident said.

According to him, residents scampered for safety when the bomb exploded but reconvened at the scene a few minutes after only to discover the suspected suicide bomber lying dead in a pool of his own blood.

The man said the incident occurred near the Eke Market, Afikpo, the biggest

Confusion as explosion kills one in Ebonyi

... we lost inspector to grenade blast - PPRO • Govt bans procession, mass gathering

market in the area. The explosion, he added, caused tension and panic in the community.

It was learnt that the upper part of the man's body was completely destroyed from the impact of the bomb.

A retired journalist and President General of the Town Union, Jasper Okoro, and other residents said it was a suicide bomb explosion.

Okoro said the explosion was near the Eke Market and a primary

school.

He said scores of people would have been killed if the bomber had reached the market or the school.



However, the state Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), DSP Loveth Odah, said the victim of the blast was a policeman on duty in the area.

She said the policeman was a Mobile Police officer, Inspector Idi Aminu, on special deployment to Afikpo North Local Government Area.

Odah disclosed that Aminu died as a result of an accidental hand grenade explosion.

She said: "The social media has it that there is a bomb explosion in Ebonyi. There is no bomb explosion in the state; they are just doing this to create more trouble."

Nnewi community holds town union election amid crisis

Echezona Okafor

NNEWI

There was tension yesterday at Uruagu-Nnewi in Nnewi North Local Government Area of Anambra State, as the community held election of the Uruagu Nnewi Community Development Union, amid crisis and alleged irregularities.

It was learnt that a notable oil dealer, Onyekachukwu Innocent Okoli aka Organizer, was declared President General-elect in the election held at the palace of the traditional ruler of the community, Obi Afam Obi, amid jubilation from his supporters.

However, Okoli's announcement was greeted by condemnation and protests from supporters of his major opponent, Hon. Eloka Ike.

A member of the Hon. Eloka Ike Campaign Council, Mr. Chetachukwu Okeke, said the election was marred by irregularities and massive rigging.

He said: "At the onset of the voting, our principal, Eloka Ike, protested what he saw as high level irregularity in the election process, whereby a member of the Election Committee openly told delegates to vote for one of the contestants, Mr. Innocent Okoli. When we raised the alarm, the committee, led by Arthur Ngube, ignored us.

"We also declared that we had no

confidence in a member of the Interim Committee, Obiora Okeke, who we felt was not neutral in the process, but the committee insisted that he had to be part of the election process, because he was a member of the community's Interim Government.

"Even when we saw some members of the committee stuffing the ballot box with papers to give their preferred candidate undue advantage, we raised the alarm, but the committee ignored us. Now, after the election, instead of the total votes being 145, according to the number of accredited delegates, what was got, far outnumbered the number of accredited delegates."

Also, Ike said that irregularities in the