

# Crime

## How 44 youths were killed in cult related-clashes during 7/7 celebration

Taiwo Jimoh

### Cult killing

**N**o fewer than 44 youths were killed in a violent clash between various rival cult groups, during the recent celebration of July 7/7 across the country.

Conflicts between rival cult groups often result in brutal killings, beheadings, proliferation of arms, ammunition and display of dangerous weapons in the society.

The clash between rival cult groups, it is believed to be as a result of battle for supremacy, dominance, control of territories and to gain prestige over others in their various communities.

The reason killing among cultists is always on the increase in July, is because it is a month that is significant to a group of the cultists and it is also a month to initiate new members, to celebrate and to also do some other things.

Some states where cult killing happened

### Oyo

A source said on July 6, 2024, in Oyo State, a member of the Eiye confraternity was shot dead by suspected Aiye members during their anniversary celebration, causing panic among residents and 21 suspects were arrested.

### Osun

At the Osun State University, Okuku Campus, about 10 members of the Buccaneer cult group were killed in a clash that broke out at the University leading to panic and apprehension in the town.

It was gathered that one DY a rusticated student of the school who always come into the campus to lure students, lured one of the buccaneer member into Aiye fold and the Aiye boy was accused of divulging secret about buccaneers to the Aiye which didn't go down well with the buccaneers and fight broke out between that on July 15, 2024.

The source added that the fight extended to one Mexico Hotel, where one Towobola Mohammed, alias Masha and Samuel, alias BOT, both members of the buccaneers were killed and several others injured in the clash that generated panic.

### Lagos

On July 10, in the Mushin area of the Lagos State, a clash broke out between



The eight suspected cultists arrested at Okuku in Osun State during operation by police



The Inspector General of Police, Kayode Egbetokun

tween Aiye boys and another confraternity, where one Bola, alias Bayern, was shot and butchered to death by the rival cult group and several others injured.

Also, on July 7, a violent confrontation resulted in at least nine deaths in the Ijanikin area, with several others injured. While in the Bariga area of the state, another rival clash broke out on July 6, during the pre-celebration of 7/7, three Eiye members were killed.

### Ogun

Meanwhile, on July 7, 11 fatalities was also recorded in the Sagamu area of Ogun State, the following day, police in several states, including Ekiti and Rivers, announced the heightening of security measures to prevent gatherings and potential violence related to cult celebrations of July 7 that had witnessed numerous violent confrontations in the past.

### Edo

On July 7, 2024, a rival cult group killed at least 10 people in Edo State, while cult clashes in Benin City led to multiple fatalities, including the shooting of Ehis Dada, after church service and several others sustained injuries while scampering for safety in the church premises.

A source said on July 17, there was another clash between a group called Maphite and Aiye, while the Aiye group attacked Maphite members, in retaliation Maphite group stabbed

and killed two members of the Aiye in the Ekpoma area of the state.

### Rivers

It was gathered that a rival cult group called Deebam and Deewell engaged each other in violent power struggle to establish dominance in Ogoniland on July 7, leading to seven deaths with several injuries during the clash.

The clash was said to have escalated to other parts of the Rivers State community affecting economic and social activities of the town.

### Anambra

Another deadly clash occurred in Anambra State that claimed the lives of a Viking member and a civilian who was caught in the cross fire.

An Aiye member was said to have been killed by a Viking member called Carton on July 12, while one Onye, a civilian, a cousin of the Viking member from Mgbaukwu in Anambra State was also killed during gunfire. However, two days after the incident, an Aiye member identified as Echezona was also killed few minutes away from his house.

Onye, it was gathered had never been involved in any cult related activity before he was killed. His only misfortune was his association with his Viking cousin. Onye was said to have gotten married two years ago and only buried his mother few weeks before he was killed by the cultists in the state.

### POCACOV coordinator

Responding to the various cult related clashes and killings, the National Coordinator, Police Campaign Against Cultism and Other Vices (POCACOV), CSP Bisi Okuwobi, a crime preventive unit created by the Inspector General of Police, Kayode Egbetokun, said the fight against cultism and drugs must not be limited to the police. He said the law enforcement officers cannot combat crime alone, which is why

IGP deemed it fit to strengthen the POCACOV.

"It is imperative to partner with the Police on what they are doing through community policing. POCACOV is like community policing, because we campaign and advocate against cult activities and its consequences.

"We are also holding programmes to sensitise children about the need not to join cult, not to abuse drugs and to avoid criminal activities, because there are consequences for it."

She assured that any cultist who wants to renounce his membership should come out boldly as he would not be punished, but would be helped to live a good life, the same thing with those involved in drugs.

"Come out and you will not be punished, but if you don't renounce and you are arrested, you will face the consequences. POCACOV does not arrest, but we can only help victims."

### Security expert

A security expert, Mr Femi Adejumo, said those who don't know what some of the confraternities were created for and the purpose are using it to eliminate each other in a gruesome way.

He urged the Federal Government and state governments to formulate a way that will reduce and scare them away from it.

"Some of the states should emulate what Lagos and Edo State did, despite the law, but not as much, they should be dealt with. Universities and Polytechnics should also formulate a law against cultism in their various institutions.

"The worst part of the story now, is that artisans, such as bricklayers, welders, tailors and farmers are into cultism, just to be a big boy in the community. The unit created by the IGP recently called Pocacov is doing well to advocate and enlighten youths about the use of drugs and cultism."

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