

# 15 Feared Killed as Rival Cults Strike in P'Harcourt

**R**ambo could not have done better. With automatic rifles in their hands and hate, revenge and murder hanging around their necks, warring cultists took Port Harcourt, Rivers State, by storm yesterday for the second day running. Pandemonium broke out as residents ran for safety. It was sorrow, tears and blood. At the end of it all—or, more aptly, at the interval, for no one knows the end yet—15 persons had been dispatched to their early graves.

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*From Ahamefula Ogbu*

*in Port Harcourt*

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It was another day, another trouble in the city yesterday as rival cult groups battled one another and the police leading to the halting of all activities and the death. The casualty figure for the two days is put at 15 people, although the Police acknowledged only eight bodies as having being recovered so far.

As early as 4pm when the

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## 15 FEARED KILLED *Cont'd from P1*

ever busy education area was full of life, people who were transacting businesses were rattled by the sound of automatic gunfire which caused a stampede. Motorists abandoned their vehicles in the middle of the road and fled in different directions.

When THISDAY called the Commissioner of Police, Mr. Felix Ogbaudu, he con-

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the bank's market acceptance.

Comparing Afribank's pre-tax profit of N9 billion at year end and its N4 billion the first quarter has brought its upside value potential to the fore. Renewed confidence in the bank has also made investors to place its shares on high demand resulting in sharp increases in its price - a development that has made the bank the toast of the capital market.

firmed that as at the time of speaking with us, there were still shootings at the Njemanze area but could not confirm whether it was between rival cult groups or militants.

He however said that he had dispatched his men to the place and that they were fighting off the boys who are armed with automatic weapons.

Asked to give the casualty figure, he said he could not be specific since reports were still coming in and being collated.

He however admitted that as at the last count from the Monday clash, no fewer than eight people were killed in the cross fire between the cultists.

According to him, the final report was that "three corpses were picked from Lagos bus stop, two from Rumuolumeni where houses were also burnt, five corpses from Eleme junction while a

lot of people were hit by stray bullets".

The police had to mobilise and chase them with an armoured tank. This turned the Njemanze area up to Abonema water front into a battle ground where guns and dynamites were freely used.

At a point, the police seemed to have had an upper hand when they pushed the cultists through Udi Street before a scenario which looked like a reinforcement of the cultists led to more firings in the area.

At a point, Aba Road beyond the Boro Park became deserted while motorists who were trapped on top of the Mile 1 bridge stood there and watched the live show of exchange of fire between the cultists and the police.

Some of the cultists pushed towards the Education Area were seen wearing black while the ones that were at Abonema Wharf

side wore black and white, an indication that they were locked in a cult war for an apparent control of the areas.

While on top of the bridge, where THISDAY was also trapped and watched the scenario, an explosion which caused another pandemonium was heard around Sangana area. The stampede caused by the explosion behind the police station led to the flooding of the railway line. People in the Fruit market and those that straggled from Mile 1 on foot ran for their dear lives.

The fight was first noticed on Sunday evening when a clash in University of Port Harcourt led to the detonation of dynamite there before it spilled into town where stray bullets allegedly killed a nurse and another woman roasting pears and corn along the road.