

Four feared dead, four houses razed in Owerri cult clash

By Chidi Nkwopara

OWERRI—ABOUT four persons were feared dead and four houses completely burnt to ashes as two rival secret cults, the Black Axe and Vikings, clashed at Umumbazu, Nekede, Owerri West local government area of Imo State.

Confirming the incident on telephone, the traditional ruler of Nekede, Eze Jonas K. Agumanu, lamented that the cult groups engaged themselves in a fierce gun duel and when the firing died down, no fewer than four lay dead.

“Eyewitness accounts revealed that the two rival cult groups engaged themselves in a fierce gun battle at Umumbazu, Nekede. When the firing ceased, about four persons were reported dead”, the royal father said.

Although he could not immediately say if all the dead persons were members of the cult groups, he however said that the hoodlums knew who they were looking for.

“It is sad that these youngsters, who are believed to be leaders of tomorrow, are not only armed to the teeth but do not also have any re-

spect for human lives. Nigeria is obviously in trouble”, Agumanu lamented.

He was particularly irked that a member of his royal cabinet, Nze Cyril Osuji, was picked by the police in error, on the allegation that he is the godfather of one of the warring cult groups, stressing that he was vouching for the elderly man's innocence.

Reacting to the incident also, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Mr. Ahmed Yusuf, confirmed the story but only differed on the number of people killed in the mayhem.

“Only three people were reported killed in the incident involving the Vikings and Black Axe. The Command has arrested about seven suspects while 17 others have been declared wanted by the police”, the DCP said.

Answering another question, Mr. Yusuf said that the Command sent a detachment of its officers and men to the area and normalcy has returned to Nekede.

“The Command has sent its officers and men to Umumbazu, Nekede to keep the peace and arrest the suspects. For now, normalcy has returned to the community and people are

going about their normal businesses. The Command has also briefed the Inspector General of Police about the incident”, Yusuf said.

Tribunal dismiss application

By Enyim Enyim

O N I T S H A — ANAMBRA State Election Petition Tribunal sitting in Awka yesterday dismissed an application filed by INEC praying the tribunal to strike out the petitions filed by candidates of four political parties challenging INEC's declaration of Senator Joy Emodi as the winner of the Anambra North Senatorial election. The tribunal said the application by INEC lacked merit.

The petitions were filed by Mr. Jessie Balonwu of Labour Party, Mr. Celestine Ughanze of AC, Hon. Alphonsus Igbeke of ANPP and Dr. Mike Arch of APGA. While Igbeke is saying that there was election in the zone, and