

## Cult war in Rivers: 16 killed in shootout

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By Jimitota Onoyume

**PORT HARCOURT**—No fewer than 16 persons have been reportedly shot dead in Ula Upata community, Ahoada East Local Government Area of Rivers State, by suspected cultists.

Rivers State Police Command, on its part, said it was aware of the death of eight persons.

The state Police Public Relations Officer, Ahmad Muhammad, told *Vanguard* that suspected cultists were behind the murder, adding that the timely intervention of policemen saved the community from more deaths in the cult war.

“The incident was one of cult related clashes at Ula Upata community, Ahoada East council. Eight persons were killed.

“The quick intervention of our men stopped the situation from escalating. One of the suspected cultists was arrested and an English pump action

gun recovered from him. Investigation is right now ongoing,” he said.

An eye witness, Mr Frank Alabi, said he was in his room in the village when suddenly he heard gunshots, adding that he quickly ran into a nearby bush from where he monitored the shootout.

He said that the assailants, after killing 10 people in his Ula Upata village, moved to Ahoada West to kill six other persons.

“I saw everything. I was in my room when about five boys started shooting. The killing started about 12.05a.m. I was in my house when I saw the killers. They carried three AK47 and two pump action guns. I called the DPO and the Joint Task Force, JTF.”

One of those killed was a Police Corporal and nine others in the community before they later moved to Ahoada West to kill six more persons.

**FEMI AJASA**

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