

Pastor, 2 others killed, houses burnt in Ebonyi

●As youths prevent Ebubeagu from arresting member of the community

By Peter Okutu

THE founder and Pastor of Glorious Gospel Fire Assembly, John Onu, was Sunday reportedly killed by a stray bullet while praying at his Hatchery Road flat, Nkaliki area of Abakaliki Local Government Area of Ebonyi State.

The Pastor of Glorious Gospel Fire Assembly with Branches in Enugu and Abakaliki was said to have been hit by a stray bullet when some youths in Ebyia-Unphu Community tried to prevent Ebubeagu security outfit from arresting someone suspected to be guilty of an alleged crime.

It was also gathered that the country home of the Chairman of the local government area, Emmanuel Nwangele and that of his Special Assistant on Internally Generated Revenue, Chukwudi Onyibe were set ablaze.

Sources from the area said trouble started when the Special Assistant to the Council Chairman of Abakaliki Local Government Area, Chukwudi Onyibe, on Sunday took members of Ebubeagu security outfit of the council to arrest a member of the community who was accused of some criminal acts.

It was gathered that they were resisted by members of the community and a clash broke out during which one person from the community was killed.

The Chairman of the council, Emmanuel Nwangele, who hails from the community, confirmed the incident.

He said the irate youths burnt down his house and that of his SA on IGR over the incident.

Mr Nwangele lamented the destruction of his properties over the incident which he claimed he knew nothing about.

He said: "I was about to go to the village that night to calm the youths but somebody around me that time told me that it was late that it was better in the morning.

"It was after that I was informed that somebody died and that they were demonstrating to the extent that they came to one Bosco Guest House and they were dispersed by the police. They went back home and set ablaze houses.

"They also moved to my own house and also set it ablaze, destroying so many things. I said why, when I don't know the genesis of the problem?

"Late in the night, they also went back to that Bosco's hotel. According to information, they were even trying to come to Abakaliki local government headquarters but security agencies prevented them. Then this morning (Monday),

they repeated," he said.

Vanguard learnt that the youths, who had set the Guest House on fire on Sunday night, went back yesterday hearing that the fire did not do much damage to the building as it was put out the previous night.

As they regrouped and tried to set the building on fire, security agencies arrived at the scene and shot sporadically in the air to disperse them.

It was learnt that one of the bullets hit the Pastor, who was praying in his flat which is across the road from the guest house.

"He was praying in his room (upstairs) when security agencies arrived and started shooting to scare the youths away"

"He got up and tried to close his window so that the noise will not disturb him. But he was hit by one of the bullets. He was rushed to hospital where he died", a source in the area said.

Police Spokesperson, Levi Philip confirmed the incident.