

4 killed as cult war rages in Akwa Ibom

By Ochuko Akuopha & Harris Emanuel

●2 more in Delta community

RENEW cult clashes between two rival cult groups - Icelaand (The Red) and the Debam (The White) confraternities in some communities in

1, shot dead service in Ilorin

who trooped out of the church on hearing the gunshots as the gunmen ran away in a waiting car.

The Police Public Relations Officer, Okasanmi Ajayi, who confirmed the incident to journalists, yesterday, said that investigation was ongoing to arrest the perpetrators.

Okasanmi Ajayi said that the incident happened during the 7:00 am church service of the RCCG.

He said: "Late Sina Babarinde was called on the phone and as he walked out of the church to receive the call, the sound of gunshots rent the air, which drew the attention of the congregation.

"As at the time the congregation got out of the church to see what was happening, it was discovered that the estate agent was already in the pool of his blood.

"It was discovered that he was shot on the head."

Etim Ekpo and Ukanafun Local Government Areas of Akwa Ibom state have reportedly claimed four lives

A kingpin of Icelaand confraternity, simply identified as Otto, from Obon Ebot village in Etim Ekpo Local Government Area, was alleged as the mastermind of the attacks against the opposing group.

"Otto has been going around killing people, saying he has the mandate to kill those he believed are cultists for allegedly using his name to commit crimes. He uses charms to detect his targets and killed them instantly", a

resident told Journalists in Etim Ekpo.

Those killed, as gathered, include one Samuel Ekeke Mkpokporo, from Udianga Enem village and another identified simply as Gideon, from Ikot Udobong village in Etim Ekpo Local Government Area.

Besides, two others were mowed down including one King Monday John Ibanga, from Ikot Ibekwe village, and another unidentified victim from Ikot Unah village in the neighbouring Ukanafun Local Government Area.

The Youths Leader of Udianga Enem village, Comrade Udeme John, who confirmed the killings, said: "I have personally made entry concerning the matter at the Etim Ekpo Area Command".

"The remains of one of them, Samuel in Udianga Enem, were hurriedly buried on Monday (yesterday), and as the family refused pleadings by the village head, Chief Mendie Josiah Udoekoriko,

to delay the burial till the Police were informed. I had to personally report the matter to the Area Command.

"Samuel was shot dead at the Qua Iboe Church junction in Udianga Enem, while Gideon was killed at the small market in Ikot Udobong, and this would be the second such killings in my community in the recent times", he explained.

When contacted, the Police Public Relations Officer, Odiko MacDon, said the Command has beefed up security in the flashpoint communities.

In a related development, two persons were killed and many injured in Obiaruku, headquarters of Ukwuani Local Government Area, Delta State, weekend by suspected cultists.

A source said "In the last 72 hours, two persons have been confirmed dead; they are now in the mortuary and several others have been injured. They vandalize houses where they (cultists) did not meet their targets.

"The truth is that these people are faceless; you don't know them. Security men are all over the place, yet these boys surface in one part of the town, strike, and before the police got there, they had moved to another place.

"This is a real challenge for the police. There is so much tension in the town," a dependable source in the community who craved anonymity, said.

Contacted, Police Public Relations Officer of the State command, Mr Bright Edafe, confirmed the killings.