

Suspected cultists kill 4 in Bayelsa community



FILE IMAGE

By Samuel Oyadongha & Emem Idio

Yenagoa —Armed men suspected to be cultists on Easter Sunday invaded Swali community in Yenagoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa State, killing four persons.

The hooded men, armed with AK-47 rifles, according to a report, stormed the densely populated area in a Toyota Hilux at midnight.

They were said to have shot sporadically at residents celebrating the resurrection of Jesus Christ, forcing the residents to flee in different directions. Four persons were confirmed dead with several others injured.

A resident, who spoke on condition of anonymity, described the attack as terrible, saying since he took up residence in the riverine suburb, he had not witnessed such violence unleashed on innocent citizens.

“It was terrible, I have never seen anything like this since I started living here over 10 years ago,” he said.

According to him, the attack was not an armed robbery operation as the gunmen did not steal any property, but just fired at their targets and took off.

Swali Community, which is host to the Swali Ultra Modern Market, the largest market in the state capital, is close to several security formations in the state.

The area is also known as den of two rival cult groups locked in supremacy battle for territorial control.

A member of the House of Assembly representing Yenagoa Constituency I, Chief Ayibanegiyefa Egba, has condemned the attack in strong terms.

The lawmaker, during a visit to the community, described the attack, which resulted in the tragic loss of lives as “barbaric” and expressed her deepest condolences to the families of the deceased and the entire Swali community.

The Paramount Ruler of Swali Community, HRH Wilcox Job, called on the state government to mount police posts at strategic locations in order to avert future attacks.

Chief Job pleaded with the government to help to ensure safety and security of his subjects from future attacks. explaining that the community had requested for the

mounting of a police post to beef up security.

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Contacted, the Bayelsa State Police Public Relations Officer, Musa Mohammed, who confirmed the attack, said security had been beefed up to restore normalcy in the community.

He said the attack may not be related to cult clash, but law enforcement measures were in place to ensure no further breakdown of law and order or destruction of lives and property happens in that community again.