



Press Release
November 22, 2006
Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria

On Monday, November 20, 2006 at about 1:45 PM a group of five gunmen entered the Academic Associates PeaceWorks office compound at 116/118 Woji Road, GRA Phase II, Port Harcourt, Rivers State and killed two individuals. It is believed that the gunmen were escorted by at least six other accomplices on motorcycles who provided transportation, and blocked access to the street during the operation.

The gunmen killed Wariboko Ngeribara (aka 'Yellow Man'), the alleged target; the fatal shooting of Bertram Ogbonna was most likely a case of mistaken identity or an accidental death. It is clear, however that the death of Wariboko, a former 'Ateke boy' and the subsequent death of Bertram are the results of cult violence.

Witnesses believe the attack was orchestrated by members of the Niger Delta Vigilante led by Ateke Tom. Furthermore, eyewitnesses confirmed that the men armed with AK47s and a pistol included "Charlie Bu", "Ibikunu", "Marrio", "Solofino", and "Innocent" plus at least six unidentified participants who were waiting outside the compound. Once the attackers gained access to the compound, a stick of dynamite was exploded in the main car park to create confusion and panic. It was apparent that the attackers knew the layout of the compound as they proceeded directly to the AAPW office- bypassing the other partner office located within the compound, and immediately entered the conference room where they shot their victims.

The alleged principal target, Wariboko, a former member of Ateke's group left his cult to join Soboma George, a splinter faction, where he served as a senior leader (Anchor Head) and is believed to have been responsible for various violent activities within the Port Harcourt area. His family members say that he recently converted to Christianity. There have been occasional armed battles between the Ateke and Soboma groups over the past year. Ogbonna was not a member of any cult and was simply working with AAPW on nonviolent elections. He was a family man and a law student.

Other injuries sustained during the attack include, the broken leg of AAPW's Godwin Egbulefi, a bullet wound to the leg of volunteer Prince Zuweigha Andabai, and a blow to the face of AAPW's Wesley Okpara (aka Smokey), all of whom are recuperating from their wounds.

It is important to emphasize that the attack occurred as eighteen members of the Joint Niger Delta Youth Leaders Forum, were making final preparations for a voter education/nonviolence rally which was scheduled to take place in Port Harcourt today. We have embarked upon a Niger Delta-wide campaign for nonviolent and fair elections in 2007, which includes rallies; voter and civic education; promotion of issue-based campaigns; election conflict monitoring and response; establishment of Nonviolent Election Committees in 20 of the most conflict-prone local governments in Bayelsa, Delta and Rivers States to monitor both elections and performance of elected officials.



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The rally has been temporarily postponed to allow the victims, and our staff time to recover. AAPW wishes to express on behalf of the victims' families, and the people of the Niger Delta that cult violence will no longer be tolerated. Moreover, as the various political aspirants kickoff their political campaigns, and as political tensions escalate.

AAPW and its supporters will continue to implement a series of planned activities to support nonviolent free and fair elections.

Following the attack AAPW's Executive Director, Chief Dr. Judith Burdin Asuni has been meeting with members of the victims' families, the Rivers State Commissioner of Police, the Commander Mobile Police, the State Head of the Criminal Investigations Department, and the State Director of Security.

AAPW has also received overwhelming cooperation and encouragement from various individuals and organizations in the Federal Government of Nigeria, and the international community.

If you have any relevant information concerning the attack on our office please contact us at:

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