

# Bloodbath in Benue: Rival cult gangs kill 8 in supremacy clash



*picture used as illustration*

**By Peter Duru**

**Makurdi—No fewer than eight persons have been killed in a deadly supremacy battle between rival cult groups across parts of Benue State, including Makurdi, the state capital, and Jato Aka, in Kwande Local Government Area, in what security sources described as a fierce fight for territorial control.**

**The bloody clashes, which have spread across several towns in the state, are believed to be among the deadliest cult-related confrontations in recent times. The violence had earlier erupted in Otukpo town, where one person was killed, and in Gboko town, where two persons were murdered, all reportedly linked to a fierce battle over control of territory.**

**Sources disclosed that the Otukpo and Gboko incidents, which occurred a few days ago, spilled into Makurdi and Jato Aka in Kwande LGA on Wednesday, resulting in the deaths of three persons in Makurdi and two others in Jato Aka.**

**An eyewitness narrated that the victims in Makurdi were shot at close range during separate attacks that began around midnight.**

**“Those killed were a young man named Mr. Hundred, who was shot opposite the Wurukum Mosque. Also shot within the same time was Mr. Martins Dagba, also known as ‘Wonder,’ who was killed beside Solace Hotels, and Mr. Aondoaseer Yisa, also known as ‘Poka.’ He was shot on Usman Street, all in the Wurukum area of Makurdi town,” the eyewitness said.**

**He added: “After shooting them, their attackers vanished into thin air. We learned there were earlier separate fights in Gboko and Otukpo also. Human life is worth nothing to those behind these clashes and killings. This is sad.”**

**Reacting to the development, the Chairman of Makurdi Local Government Area, Mr. Joseph Keffi, strongly condemned what he described as the “senseless killing of three persons by unknown cult groups at Wurukum in Walomayo Council Ward of Makurdi LGA.”**

**In a statement issued by his Media Aide, Nathaniel Mayorofmbawa, the chairman decried the killings while addressing communities in the area through his Special Adviser on Security and Political Matters, Mr. Mark Terhide.**

**Extending his condolences to the bereaved families and communities mourning their loved ones, Keffi assured residents of the council’s firm commitment to ensuring peace in the area.**

**He reiterated that his administration “is working closely with security agencies and stakeholders to intensify efforts aimed at strengthening security across the Local Government.”**

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The chairman further emphasised his resolve to rebuild communities, enhance security, and promote sustainable development across the LGA.

He urged residents to remain calm and vigilant and to promptly report suspicious movements to security agencies, stressing that community collaboration remains critical in defeating criminal elements and entrenching lasting peace in the area.

Confirming the clash in Jato Aka, the spokesperson of the Benue State Police Command, Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP), Udeme Edet, said the command was on top of the situation, with several arrests already made.

In a statement, Edet disclosed that operatives attached to the Jato Aka Division of the command, on Wednesday at about 10:30 a.m., “responded to a violent clash between rival cult groups known as Red and Black.

“The clash resulted in the death of two male persons, while other victims sustained varying degrees of injuries and were taken to nearby medical facilities for treatment,” she said.

According to her, the police intervention led to the arrest of eight suspects, identified as Adebo Mvaater, Pineter Akurayati, Daniel Ese, Samuel Kwaghzer, Isaac Iorapul, Terungwa Tertese, Aondonenge Aper, and Ternenge Aondokura, while other suspects fled.

Edet added that the operation also resulted in the recovery of one locally fabricated pistol, one expended cartridge, two axes and two machetes, noting that efforts were ongoing to arrest other fleeing suspects involved in the violence.

“We are already on top of the situation, several arrests have been made and they will be charged to court and persecuted. The Commissioner of Police remains resolute in his determination to eradicate cultism and all forms of criminality across the state,” she said.

