

Bloodbath At Bodo, Bori As Cultists Go On Rampage

On Wednesday, July 19, 2006, Bodo-City, the most populous Ogoni community in the Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State witnessed an unprecedented cult violence and its attendant bloodletting as two cult groups armed with various types of dangerous weapons such as AK47, G3, locally made guns, dynamites, machetes, charms and amulets engaged one another in bloodletting reprisal violence.

The two warring groups are the Deewell, a wing of the Supreme Vikings Confraternity (SVC) and Deebam, an organ of the Klansmen Konfraternity (KK). The violent groups alleged to be loyal to politicians in the area, are fighting for political supremacy and territory control as 2007 elections draw closer.

CEHRD in late July released a detailed report on the cult crisis called, “The Bodo war of Attrition”. It can also be found on CEHRD website under the Human Rights programme.

Officials of the State Security Services (SSS) in Port Harcourt later arrested Kenneth Kobani, the Rivers State Commissioner for Finance and Pidomson, Gabriel Jnr, a member of the Rivers State House of Assembly representing the Gokana constituency. Kobani is alleged to be a major backer of the Deebam, while Pidomson is accused of sponsoring the Deewell. Both politicians hail from the Bodo-City community. Over 20 persons had so far been killed in the violent cult clashes. The gangs are still in the community killing, looting, raping women and under-aged girls, unleashing violence and harassing folks.

On August 16, 2006, a team of armed mobile police invaded the Bodo community and arrested 21 innocent villagers who are neither members or have links with any cult group or the warring ones. The victims of police recklessness were first held at the police cell in Port Harcourt prisons; Two of them could not be kept in prisons, because they are minors. They are held at the Port Harcourt Remand Home. On August 22, 2006, CEHRD wrote a letter to the Rivers State Police Commissioner requesting the immediate release of the innocent people, but the police ignored the letter and instead sent them to the prisons and remand homes respectively where they are still being held.

Also, on October 6, 2006, the Deebam and Deewell of the Bori axis clashed in Bori, the headquarters of the Khana Local Government and traditional headquarters of the Ogoni nationality.

Both sides recorded deaths of their members. The cultists who invaded Bori, came into the area from Zaakpon, a Community that has become a ghost town since 2003 over struggle for chieftaincy. Politicians and elites from the area later used them for their selfish agenda. Residents of Bori and its environs now live in fear as a result of the nefarious activities of the rampaging cultists armed with superior weapons like AK47, with which they kill, rape and terrorise people. Zaakpon is now a haven of the cultist. Poor villagers had since 2003 deserted the area.

The signals are too bad for the region's movement towards democratization, the entire Niger Delta zone is infested with several gangs enjoying the funding and supports of politicians and government officials who use them for their purposes. Indeed, the dangerous Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) are out of control and the (gangs) are on the loose again. CEHRD is worried that if the Nigerian security agencies fail to act now in a honest, transparent and patriotic way, the situation seems hopeless and sooner than later would explode and consume all. Indeed, no one is safe.