

Communal crisis: 31 royal fathers arrested in Bayelsa

DENNIS NAKU, Yenagoa

NO fewer than thirty
one chiefs have been
arrested by police authorities
in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State,
following their involvement
in the Egweama and Liama
communal conflict in Brass
Local Government Area, in
which about 12 persons have
been killed.

Although the identities
of the detainees who are
currently cooling their
heels at the State Criminal
Investigation Department
(CID) of the State Police
Command were not disclosed
as at press time, it was
however gathered that they
have been in detention since
Thursday.

The state Police Public
Relations Officer, (PPRO), Mr.
Ibokete Iniobong, a Deputy

Superintendent of Police
(DSP) confirmed the arrest
of the chiefs from the both
communities, but could not
give an exact figure of persons
telling the command all they
know about the hostilities
which rocked the area.

Investigations by *Saturday
Champion* revealed that the
chiefs may have been arrested
based on the orders of the
~~state government~~, as the
warring communities have
refused to shield their swords,
despite pleas from the deputy
Governor, Hon. Peremobowei
Ebebi during his visit to the
troubled communities.

Police sources who gave the
number of those in detention
as 31, said the suspects may
be arraigned in court of law to

curb the resurgence of crises
in the communities.

The chiefs who had earlier
met with the deputy Governor,
promising to maintain peace,
but returned to the trenches
resulting to loss of more lives
and destruction of several
buildings.

Against this backdrop,
many inhabitants of Liama
and Egweama, have deserted
the riverine villages to
neighbouring communities,
while some had fled to
Yenagoa and Port Harcourt
for safety, even as others are
squattling with relations.

It would be recalled that
the cause of the mayhem has
been linked to the discovery
of an unexplored oil well by
Emerald Energy Resource,
at a fishing port, which both
communities are laying claim
to.