

2 dead as PDP members clash

By KENNETH OFOMA

AFIKPO town in Afipko North local government area of Ebonyi state has witnessed violent clashes among rival political opponents within the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) with two persons confirmed dead, while properties worth several millions of naira were destroyed during the party's primaries for councillorship aspirants in Egwuegu ward.

Fear of reprisal attacks has forced many indigenes of the area to run for dear life while youths embarked on rampage with a vow to get those behind the killings.

The primaries are in preparation for the forthcoming council elections slated for December 20 by the Ebonyi State Independent National Electoral Commission (EBSIEC).

Confirming the incident to newsmen, the Councillor representing the ward, Hon. Otu Christian said that violence broke out in the area following alleged killing of one Ikechukwu Eze, a student of Akanu Ibiam Federal Polytechnic, Unwana, by thugs believed to be working for one of the councillorship aspirants.

Once they don't allow the will of the people to prevail, we'll continue to be having this type of crisis. Already a house belonging to Mr. Ogbu Egwurochi has been burnt down and more things are still happening. This whole thing started when we heard that our brother, Eze, was killed by thugs working for

an aspirant.

"The aspirant is already on the run, but the youths who went after the thugs were able to catch one of them who confessed that they were sent by the aspirant. He was also burnt to death. This is only but primaries for the councillorship aspirants and people are being killed," he narrated, while pleading with the youths to allow peace to reign.

When contacted, the traditional ruler of the community, Ezeogo John Egwu confirmed the incident, but stated that efforts were currently being made to restore normalcy to the area. He said the matter had been reported to the police at Afikpo.

Meanwhile, following the desertion of the area by indigenes, the community has become a ghost of itself.

Efforts to get the Police Public Relation Officer, Nnudam Frederick and the Chairman of the PDP in the state Chief Dave Umahi to comment on the development proved abortive.

While the PPRO was said to be away from the state, the PDP Chairman was said to be busy with the collation of the primaries' results at one of the hotels in Abakaliki, the state capital.

Rivers govt suspends youth activities

TONY ITA ETIM, Port Harcourt

RIVERS State Government has suspended all youth activities in the Community in Rumuekpe Community in Emohua local government area.

Chairman of the Rivers State Peace and Rehabilitation Committee, Alhaji Hassan Tam-Douglas who made the pronouncement after a meeting with the factions to the crises in the community also announced the suspension of Community Development Committee, (CDC) as well as chieftaincy matters related to the crisis.

Tam-Douglas advised multinationals including Elf and Shell operating in the community not to deal with any group

or individual in the name of the community, and warned them from parading themselves as having the mandate of the community.

However, Tam-Douglas said that indigenes of the company handling contracts with the communities were not affected by the directive, and that such contract must not be on account of the relationship between the company and the community.

He appealed to those who fled the community to return and continue their normal life, warning that any faction linked with abduction, killing or ambushing of persons in the community would be arrested and prosecuted.

The chairman explained that the measures were taken to end all issues

promoting crises in the community.

In his remarks, Chairman Caretaker Committee of Emohua local government area, Chief Allwell Igbor advised the people of Rumuekpe to abide by the decision of the committee to pave way for peace in the community.

Igbor thanked members of the committee, especially the State Governor for his tireless effort at restoring peace not only in Rumuekpe Community but the state at large.

Both sides to the crises at the meeting attended by the Divisional Police Officer in-charge of Emohua, Mr. Lucky Yowika and members of the Joint Task Force in the area embraced each other as a sign of true reconciliation and peace.