

5 killed in Rivers' communal clash

CHINEDU WOSU, Port Harcourt

AT least five persons have been confirmed dead in Obele-Ibaa Community in Emohua Local Government Area of Rivers State, as a result of chieftaincy tussle between two factions.

This is as the Joint Military Taskforce, JTF, confirmed the arrest of four notorious cultists behind the mayhem in Obele-Ibaa. Teke, a spiritual shrine belonging to the cultists was also raided and burnt down by JTF.

The intra-community clash which occurred on Monday has sent villagers fleeing to neighbouring towns for safety.

Eyewitness told our correspondent that buildings and economic trees were severely destroyed as factions in the community engaged themselves in severe fighting with armed youths deployed to cause havoc in the community.

Contacted, spokesman of JTF, Lt Col Sagir Musa, confirmed the incident and said the command had arrested four notorious gangs leaders in connection with the killings in the area.

He said the JTF 111 sector in Isiokpo has raided the cultist's hideouts and recovered charms, and destroyed their spiritual shrine located in the community.

The JTF spokesman also

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confirmed that the villagers had deserted the troubled community for safety in neighboring Ikwerre villages as JTF has been deployed to maintain peace and unity.

Lt Col Musa further said he command would ensure periodic patrol in the area in order to flush out the bandits and miscreants in the community.

Communal clash

According to JTF, "we are responsible outfits; we have adopted an appreciation of the situation".

He assured the residents of the state that the command is ready to provide security of lives and property across the city as they celebrate the yuletide season and charge on cultists to desist from

violence and embrace peace and oneness.

Our correspondent reports that, Obele Ibaa community over the years had been in centre of crisis as many lives has been wasted as the problem of chieftaincy tussles lingers on, houses destroyed and villagers deserted for safety even as children abandon schools and churches for the cultists.