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Countryman



Gunmen kill militant leader

CHINEDU WOSU, *Port Harcourt*

There was uneasy calm and atmosphere of tension in Okrika in Rivers States as gunmen killed the leader of a militant outfit, the Bush Boys one Mr. Sunny Opuambe in his home town on Sunday.

Opuambe was the leader of the Bush Buys of Okrika, a factional warring youth group in the Wakirike kingdom of Rivers State.

The Bush Boys of Okrika is a youth wing of the Tobonuju, a group that has been chased out of Okrika by Ateke Tom's group called the Niger Delta Vigilante Group.

Eyewitness told *Daily Champion* that Opuambe was assassinated at a drinking spot along Abuluma, in Port Harcourt city local government area, where the Bush Boys have been taking refuge for close to a decade now.

The killing of Opuambe came few hours after a deadly encounter between men of the Joint Task Force (JTF) and Ateke Tom.

It would be recalled that the JTF had attacked one of the camps that belong to Ateke Tom resulting in the killing of scores of members of JTF. Ateke in a telephone interview with our correspondent said though some of his foot soldiers had died in the process, he had succeeded in capturing one JTF naval gun boat.

He said the attack launched at him by the JTF was uncalled for, saying such was the reason why he had to strike back to save his life.

Opuambe's death has added to countless number of deaths recorded in Okrika's traditional and political skirmishes.

It was gathered that several peace moves as well as traditional oath taking had been administered between the Bush Boys and NDV.

It is being suspected that Opuambe would have been killed either by security men or men from Ateke camp.

Many who reacted on the current development said the unsuspected murder of Opuambe would lead to fresh feud between Ateke's men and the Bush Boys, all from within Okrika community.

Meanwhile, the NDV has threatened to carry out reprisal attacks on families of identified kidnappers if the perpetrators persist in the abduction of children and other innocent Nigerians.

Spokesman for the Ateke Tom led militant group, Mr. Tamunokuro Ebitari, who gave the

warning yesterday in a statement released to journalists in Port-Harcourt, said the group decided upon this action in order to put an end to the spate of kidnapping, especially of children in Rivers State.

Ebitari said the NDV and Patriotic Force are therefore advising those involved in the abduction of blacks and children to desist as their actions were rubbishing the genuine struggle of the Niger Delta militants.

"We want to warn those involved in the kidnapping of blacks and children to release whoever they've in their custody and also stop any further of such actions because we'll not allow this to continue to rubbish our genuine struggle.

"Having seen that the Joint Task Force inspite of the billions spent in the name of security can't stop this evil against the innocent populace, we've decided to take responsibility of making sure that we put an end to this ugly phenomenon", he added.

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