

Rivers : Death toll rises to 18

DENNIS NAKU, Port Harcourt

DEATH toll in the communal crisis between Kegbara-Dere and neighbouring Baranyowa-Dere in Gokana local government area of Rivers State rose from 15 to 18 yesterday, as fighting entered third day.

Also, six persons have been wounded, while the

state police command said it had arrested 10 suspects believed to be involved in the attacks and transferred to the State Criminal Investigation Department (SCID).

It was learnt that youths from Baranyowa community allegedly launched a fresh attack on its neighbour about 6.00 a.m on Wednesday and immediately stormed the

Kegbara-Dere community.

Two persons were killed in Kegbara-Dere during the attack while more buildings and valuable property were also destroyed. One person is reportedly missing.

Already, many residents have fled to nearby Mogho, Kpor and Bodo communities to seek refuge.

The State Police Public

Relations Officer (PPRO), Dr. Rita Inoma-Abbey who confirmed the latest deaths in a text message yesterday gave the names of those killed as Dumbari George and Barida Ngia, while Dumbor Nanwin Muubana is missing.

Inoma-Abbey, a Superintendent of Police (SP) said the Police had visited the Terabor General Hospital to confirm the casualty figure, while the six persons wounded are receiving medical attention.

She said: "Latest information from Hon. John Kpalap of K-Dere, revealed that two persons died in the attack by B-Dere on Wednesday, while six persons were wounded and admitted in Dumkil Clinic in Kpor, the local government headquarters.

"One Lekpea Taoh has been taken to Teme Clinic in Port Harcourt.

The deceased persons are Dumbari George and Barida Ngia, while Dumbor Nanwin Muubana is missing," she said.

She added that the situation in the area is still tense, although policemen have been drafted there to quell the fighting.

Daily Champion recalled that during renewed attack on Monday, no fewer than 1 persons were reported killed while over 100 houses were razed down.

The earlier crisis was due to a disagreement over a English premiership football match.

Delta governorship re-run: Professionals back Omo-Agege

DELTA Professionals have thrown their weight behind the governorship ambition of Mr. Ovie Omo-Agege, even as they said only the best must be allowed to pilot the affairs of the state in the next four years.

The group, in a statement in Asaba yesterday signed by Mr. Baribote Priye said they decided to intervene in the politics of the state because of the need to avoid mistakes of the past.

Omo-Agege formally declared to contest in the rerun election expected to hold in January in Warri last Friday, on the platform of the Republican Party of Nigeria (RPN).

The group said in view of the enormous resources at its disposal, Delta needs a strong and committed leader who has the focus and the vision

to make the state the leader in human capital development, infrastructural renewal and development, wealth creation and provision of security to safeguard lives and property.

Having perused the manifestos of the individuals vying for the coveted post of the state's helmsman during the coming rerun election, the group noted that Omo-Agege's five steps to posterity stand out as the best.

According to its statement, the free education programme, free health services, infrastructural development, the plan to revamp the agricultural sector and community policing would go a long way in turning the state around for the better.

It criticised the almost four years of the Dr. Emmanuel Uduaghan-led administration before it was sacked by the

Court of Appeal, adding that the government was not able to achieve much when compared with neighbouring states, especially Rivers where the Governor, Chibuike Amaechi has made a lot of impact.

"We are compelled to throw our weight behind Obarisi Omo-Agege because of his wealth of experience, his progressive vision for the state and grassroots attachment and his acceptability across the state.

"We believe that Omo-Agege has what it takes to revive the fortune of our state, which has made a lot of impact.

The time for the desired change in our state is now and every Deltan must contribute towards making that change possible," the group said.