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# Renewed cult war leaves 10 dead in Rivers

**Written by** Henry Omuonu, P/Harcourt, on 03-08-2008 05:33

**Views** 101

Renewed fighting by rival cult groups in various parts of Rivers State has led to the death of 10 persons while scores sustained injuries in three days of intense gun fights in the state.

The latest incident happened at the Dockyard axis of Port-Harcourt on Friday night, with many residents fleeing the embattled area to safer havens in Port-Harcourt.

Sunday Trust gathered from security sources that the current gun fights are between the members of the Outlaws, led by Mr Sogboma George and those of the Niger Delta Strike Force, headed by Mr. Fara Dagogo.

A senior staff of a hospital located in Mile One area of Port-Harcourt , disclosed that 16 persons with gunshot injuries were admitted in the hospital.

He said one of the victims of the shootings had died, while the hospital was still battling to save the lives of the remaining 15 victims with various injuries.

An eyewitness who pleaded anonymity said the cultists started shooting from the creeks on Friday night, but later the rampaging cultists moved from the waterfronts and rained bullets on adjoining buildings as they battled each other.

He said some of the areas where the gunmen fought include Bende Street , Ibadan Street, Borokiri and Degema Waterside areas.

The source confirmed that over 10 persons might have been shot dead during the fighting which started at about 7:00pm and continued unabated until yesterday morning.

According to the resident, the gunmen only withdrew from the affected areas when troops of the military Joint Task Force and policemen moved into the area to restore order.

"The shootings started on Friday. We heard them from afar in the creeks. But in the evening and throughout the night, the town was reverberating with heavy gunshots.

"A lot of people fled the Old Township to other areas but those who could not leave early enough, locked themselves inside their houses."

Our correspondent learnt that in a retaliatory attack, the camp of Ebere Papa, one of the staunch supporters of Dagogo located in Obonoma/Miniama, in Akuku Toru local government area was razed by persons suspected to be George's supporters.

Papa, is alleged to have parted ways with the Outlaws after a serious disagreement with George and aligned with the NDSF leader.

The attack on his stronghold might not be unconnected with his involvement in the current cult war on the side of Fara, during which a number of George's supporters were killed.

When contacted on the telephone, the JTF spokesman, Lt. Col. Sagir Musa confirmed that the shootings were as a result of an inter-cult war between Sogboma George and the Farah group.

He said a corpse was found floating near the NPA Dockyard after a clash between troops and one of the cult groups at the yard.

Sagir said, "nobody can tell you how many people were killed because the incident happened in the night.

"But our troops had moved into the NPA Dockyard, Abuja Waterside, Bundu Waterside and Nembe Waterside to stop them from extending the fighting to these areas.

"Part of our mandate is to stop the inflow of illegal arms and as soon as we hear gunshots, we move into such areas immediately. What happened is an inter-cult clash which started early in the week. People from the Fara group are moving towards the areas to kill members of the Sogboma group," he explained.

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