

More People Feared Killed As Rivers Communal Crisis Persists

Bodo, the second biggest Ogoni town, have been grounded because people are scared to leave their homes. All the eight primary, three secondary and nursery schools in the area remained closed the whole of Friday. Parents were afraid to allow their children to go to school because of the militias who took over the streets and brandishing lethal weapons with impunity.

The Guardian learnt that the entire Bodo has been taken over by the militias, who are said to be affiliated to two politicians from the community. The fight was said to have been caused by the quest by these two politicians to control Bodo and the entire Gokana politics.

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owner of the house collected five years rent from us. Our rent will be due in 2008. He collected N700,000 each from us, and now the Lagos State government wants us to leave. We know it is for our good and safety, but how are we going to get another money to pay for a new place? One good thing the government can do for us is to compel the owner of the house to pay us the balance of the rent."

"The situation in Bodo is pathetic. We cannot leave our homes. The roads are deserted and all you hear are sporadic gunshots from the clashing militias. We are praying that the government should intervene and restore normalcy to this community. The politicians have ruined the peace of our community. The whole fight is all about who controls the politics in the area next year," he said.

Police sources disclosed to *The Guardian* that effort was being made to restore law and order in the community. It was explained that some persons have been arrested and are being interrogated.

The fight, which started in the early hours of Thursday, was said to have claimed the lives of three persons who were shot dead. Some persons are said to be missing as well. Scores of armed youths, drawn from Gokana, were seen in the morning parading the deserted streets of Bodo and brandishing guns and other lethal weapons.

The source said: "People are afraid to go out because the sound gunshots had persisted. It would be suicidal to go out. I have been hiding inside my house since today. I cannot go out. It is rather an unfortunate incident that we are experiencing self-imposed curfew in Bodo."