

# Six feared killed in fresh Rivers communal clashes

SIX persons are feared dead in fresh communal clashes between two rival gangs in Emohua Local Council of Rivers State.

Also, panic stricken residents of Bodo community in Gokana Council have called for police reinforcement to stem the activities of warring rival gangs as the death toll rose to eight.

*The Guardian* learnt that the fighting started on Saturday between members of two notorious groups, Dewell and Degbam. It was alleged that some members of Dewell group

from Ogbakiri invaded Emohua on Friday and shot dead six members of the Degbam group.

The Dewell gang members were said to have killed the six in revenge for the death of their members allegedly killed by the Degbam people. The fighting has forced some residents to flee the community for fear of being killed.

It was not clear by yesterday evening whether the fighting was politically motivated. Meanwhile, scores of armed policemen

*From Kelvin Ebiri, Port Harcourt*

have been deployed in the community to forestall further escalation of the crisis.

In Bodo, residents of the community who spoke to *The Guardian* from hiding, said the warring rival groups in the community continued their fierce fight for supremacy yesterday even as the death toll rose.

A source disclosed to *The Guardian* through telephone that members of

one of the warring groups in Bodo went to the home of one of their opponents, shot him dead and abducted his girl friend who was later killed and her corpse dumped in a nearby forest.

"Eight lives have so far been lost in this senseless power tussle between these two warring groups. A lady was kidnapped yesterday and killed. Her remains were found in a forest close to Bodo today (Sunday). We are calling on the police for full reinforcement to save the lives

of the people here," he said.

The Rivers State Commissioner of Police, Samuel Adetuyi, said more policemen had been deployed to the community and law enforcement officer working assiduously to manage the situation. He said, however, that he was yet to be briefed on the death toll and could not also confirm if anyone has been arrested.

The fight was caused by a battle for supremacy between two rival groups

alleged to be affiliated to two powerful politicians of Bodo extraction.

According to another source, the two politicians have been involved in a power tussle over who controls Bodo politics and that of the entire Gokana.

"It is a battle for supremacy ahead of the 2007 elections. The older gang group in Bodo had long perceived a new emerging one as a force that might want to alter the power equation, hence the fierce fighting that raged on throughout the night. The groups are mainly struggling for who controls Bodo and probably Gokana politics," a source said.

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