

Suspected cult members kill four in Rivers

*From Kelvin Ebiri,
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A REPRISAL attack by cult members has claimed the lives of four persons in Bodo, an Ogoni community in Gokana Local Council Area of Rivers State yesterday.

A source in Bodo disclosed to *The Guardian* in Port Harcourt, the Rivers State capital, that members of a notorious gang, the Deebam carried out the reprisal attack in the early hours of yesterday.

Some members of the Deebam were allegedly killed about two weeks ago by the Deewell group.

The allegation is rife that the two groups are being sponsored by some prominent Ogoni politicians who are bent on controlling the politics of the area. The battle for supremacy between the Deewell and Deebam gangs has claimed over 18 lives in the past four months.

A cleric, who pleaded anonymity, disclosed to *The Guardian* in a telephone interview that the scores of Deewell members drawn from various communities outside Ogoni land had stormed the town yesterday morning and went after suspected members of their arch rival, Deebam.

He explained that the fierce battle, which involved shooting, claimed four lives, while several others suffered severe injuries. According to him, the resumption of hostility forced a lot of people to close their shops to avoid being struck by stray bullet.

"The situation in Bodo is really depressing. Just when we thought this notorious and obnoxious gang war had ended, these dare devils started again yesterday. People are now scared of going about their daily business because you don't know when they will strike again. We have had enough blood-bath and this must stop," he said.

He said the youths were bragging openly as they marched through the streets of Bodo that they had acquired more lethal weapons to be used in the extermination of their opponents. The cleric expressed concern that the conflict might take a more precarious dimension if the government failed to act swiftly.