

Gunmen kill three, detonate dynamites in P'Harcourt

IT was reign of terror in the Diobu area of Port Harcourt, Rivers State capital, on Sunday night as rampaging rival gangs in a supremacy contest detonated dynamites, shot and killed four persons, including a woman.

The relative peace in the area where nine persons were killed by gunmen last Friday was shattered, as scores of armed rival groups engaged one another in a fierce battle.

The Guardian learnt that members of a group whose colleagues were ambushed and killed in the Friday incident at Emenike Junction, Diobu, Port Harcourt, decided to carry out a reprisal attack on Sunday.

Witnesses said that at about 8.30 p.m. on Sunday, a group of young men wielding AK-47 rifles and other lethal weapons, stormed two popular brothels close to Ovim Junction along Azikiwe Street and held the occupants hostage.

*From Kelvin Ebiri,
Port Harcourt*

The gunmen, who had trailed two members of a rival group suspected to be responsible for the Friday's killing to the brothel, reportedly laid siege around the brothels while their colleagues combed the entire buildings.

To ensure that their mission was not disrupted, the gunmen, who positioned their members at Ojoto and Ovim Junctions, detonated explosives suspected to be dynamites and fired sporadic gunshots into the air.

A witness at one of the brothels claimed yesterday that on spotting the two men they were looking for, the gunmen shot and killed them on the spot. A woman was also killed by them. Amid the pandemonium that ensued, several persons sustained injuries.

As the dynamites pounded the streets and the gun-

shots rent the air, residents of the area ran into their houses and shut themselves indoors. The incident forced shop owners along Ojoto, Abel Jombo, Azikwe, Ovim, Ikoku Streets to hurriedly close their businesses and desert the area for fear of being hit by stray bullets.

As they were leaving the brothels, the gunmen detonated more dynamites. Having accomplished their mission there, the gunmen proceeded to Ojoto, Wokoma, Gambia and several other streets in Diobu and continued their shooting spree.

Policemen cordoned off their office along Ikwerre Road and turned motorists back.

When *The Guardian* visited the brothels yesterday, a team of policemen came there and removed the bodies of the victims.

Rivers State Police Public Relations Officer, Mrs. Ireju Barasua, confirmed the incident, saying the police had commenced