

Five feared killed in Port Harcourt as militant groups clash

A GAIN, an orgy of violence yesterday swept across Port Harcourt, the Rivers State capital, as five persons were feared dead following a fierce gun battle between members of two rival militant groups.

However, to prevent escalation of the conflict, the Rivers State Police Commissioner, Mr. Felix Ogbaudu, yesterday ordered the deployment of police armoured tanks and cordoned off some strategic areas of the city.

The Guardian was told by eyewitnesses that gunmen numbering over 20 stormed a house close to Police Quarters in Bundu Waterside, dragged two brothers said to be from Akwa-Ibom State out and shot them dead.

One of the eyewitnesses who pleaded anonymity told *The Guardian*: "The militants, before killing the two brothers, first beat them severely. They kicked them, used gun butt to batter them. It was a gory scene. We were too scared to even sleep."

Another eyewitness said not done, the gunmen, who were all armed with AK 47 Assault Rifles and other lethal weapons, then proceeded to the Railway Quarters still in Bundu Waterside, entered a house and dragged out a woman and her brother. After brutalising them, the militants left them in a pool of blood and entered yet another building.

It was gathered that the militants, after surrounding

*From Kelvin Ebiri and
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this house, forced an iron bar burglary proof open and gained entrance into the room of a lady who allegedly accommodated one of the slain victims.

"The guy visited his girlfriend yesterday evening and was sleeping when the militants came. The guy tried to escape but to no avail. He was shot dead right inside the house. We really do not know what he might have done to those that killed him," the witness added.

Shortly after the killings in Bundu Waterside, a duel that lasted for over four hours reportedly raged in the area, leaving residents petrified till the early hours of yesterday when policemen were deployed to the area.

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DELTA State former Commissioner for Culture and Tourism, Patience Okwuofu, has denied any role in the violence that erupted at her Obomkpa community in Aniocha North Council during the Presidential Polls.

Meanwhile, the Ibusa residence of the immediate past Chairman of Oshimili North Council, Augustine Obidi, was allegedly attacked by arsonists who attempted unsuccessfully to set the building ablaze.

Okwuofu, who addressed reporters yesterday in