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Monday, February 23, 2009

## Cult gangs on rampage, kill seven in Benin

*From Alemma-Ozioruva Aliu, Benin*

**SEVEN** persons have been feared killed in Benin City, the Edo State capital in the last two days in clashes linked to cult members. Some of them either died from gunshots or through machete cuts from their assailants.

Only five days ago, a 100 level female student of the University of Benin (UNIBEN) and a male counterpart from the Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma were killed by suspected cult members.

The Guardian learnt that the battle between rival cult groups in the metropolis has shifted to hotels as their activities over the weekend led to the death of four persons.

A middle-aged man was reported killed on Friday afternoon along Boundary Road, Government Reserved Area (GRA) while another young man was also murdered by suspected cult members on Omoruyi Street, near Mr. Biggs on Saturday. His killers were said to have trailed him to the street and shot him dead.

Similarly, an unidentified man was killed at a building in Igbesamwan Junction, off Akpakpava Road on Saturday. The killers exposed part of the body of their victim outside the building apparently to attract the attention of members of the public.

Also on Friday at 8 p.m. gunmen killed an engineer, a Lebanese in charge of the construction of a shopping mall believed to belong to a one-time female senator from the state.

The engineer, who was simply identified as Fahad, was attacked by gunmen at Giwa Amu area in GRA. His attackers dragged him out of his Toyota Camry car and shot him in the stomach. He was rushed to the Military Hospital, where he died.

The assailants were said to have gone with his laptop, handsets and other valuables in the car.

The state police command spokesman, Peter Ogboi, confirmed the murder of the Lebanese but denied knowledge of the other supposedly cult-related killings. He said he could not confirm whether the Lebanese was killed by robbers or cultist gangs.

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