

10 feared dead as militants, kidnappers clash in Cross River

By Anietie Akpan, Calabar | 05 February 2017 | 4:41 am



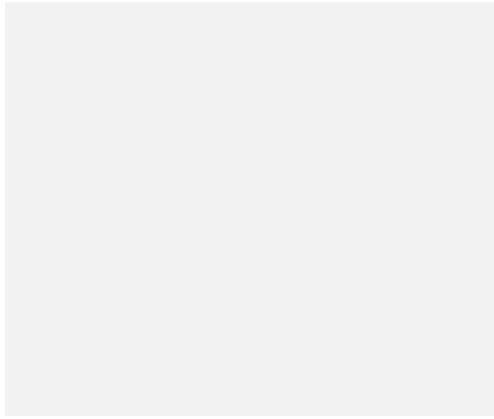
DSS

DSS Arrests Five

A bloody clash between kidnappers and a militant group known as the Bakassi Strike Force (BSF), operating in the Bakassi Peninsular of Cross River State, has claimed about 10 lives.

Although the State Police Command denied knowledge of the incident, the Department of State Services (DSS), Cross River Command, said it has arrested five kidnappers.

Leader of the BSF, Simply Benjamin, aka G1, in a statement made available to newsmen in Calabar, after the clash, said it carried out the attack on the kidnappers to prove to the general public that so many cases of kidnapping and armed robbery blamed on BSF were false.



He emphasised that all these pockets of violence, including kidnappings and armed robbery were perpetuated by a criminal group led by one Jacob, now deceased.

Benjamin said: “Two members of the group, who are also on the wanted list of the DSS, the police and other security agencies are in my custody.” The BSF boss said his group had notice of plans by the kidnappers to carry out “another terrible mission in Calabar, which I knew if they succeed in the operation, accusing fingers would have been pointed at me and my group. So, we had to confront and stop them.”

Top sources within the militants camp said, “not less than 10 persons died in the clash- one from our side and nine from their side.” Benjamin, who is equally wanted by the government had earlier raised an alarm that there were some groups in the Anantigha axis of Calabar South Local Council terrorising residents of the area. He said he intends to hand over the two suspected kidnappers to government.

The Police Public Relations Officer in the state, (PPRO), Irene Ugbo, said the police was not aware of the clash, but will certainly investigate the matter.”

The DSS in a briefing with newsmen described the BSF as a deadly group, adding that five kidnappers were recently arrested in the state. The State Director of DSS, Fubara Duke, said the kidnappers have made useful information and some have been charged to court as investigations are ongoing.