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National

Bayelsa, APC trade blame over Amassoma killings

By Julius Osahon, Yenagoa

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Governor Seriake Dickson of Bayelsa.

80 corps members rescued, 18 arrested, five vehicles vandalised, say police

The Bayelsa State government and the state chapter of the All Progressives Congress (APC) yesterday traded words over the unrest and killing of over eight persons in a protest that rocked the state-owned university town of Amassoma in Southern Ijaw Local Council.

The Bayelsa APC, in a statement signed by its newly-elected Publicity Secretary, Doifie Buokoribo, described the killing as an unwarranted display of raw power against defenceless natives.

But Bayelsa State Governor, Seriake Dickson, through his Special Adviser on Media, Dan Alabra, stated that the reaction of the state chapter of APC to the Niger Delta University (NDU) crisis is a vindication of Dickson's position that the APC in Bayelsa is allegedly a party of criminals.

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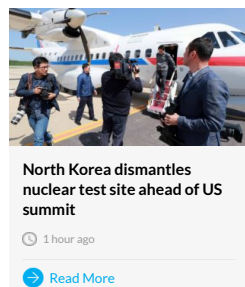
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Alabrah, who in a statement stated that the security personnel deployed in Amassoma were to ensure protection of lives and property, including the university, which is a state government investment, called on leaders of the community to collaborate with security operatives to ensure residents are protected and go about their businesses without any hindrance.



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The APC in the state, which condemned the killing of residents of Amassoma by the police and alleged that over five newly-elected APC ward members were shot dead during the unrest, blamed the governor for failing to exercise mature leadership through sincere dialogue with the protesting residents, but choosing, instead, to invite the police and army to visit death and destruction on the people.

Meanwhile, the authorities of the Bayelsa Police Command have denied that the police were involved in the killing of five persons during the unrest that rocked the Amassoma community.

The police, in a statement on Tuesday night, described as spurious the claim that security operatives shot individuals protesting at the Niger Delta University, Amassoma.

According to the police, the claim is unfounded and it is a misrepresentation of true fact. "Following the ongoing reforms by the Bayelsa State Government in ministries, agencies and parastatals in the state, some workers of the NDU, Amassoma, protested and shot down the gate of the university for over one month.

"The vice chancellor of the university and some critical stakeholders reached an agreement to reopen the school. Therefore, the school authorities informed the Bayelsa State Police Command through a letter, to provide security in the university to prevent hoodlums from stealing the property of the university.

"Consequently, on May 21, 2018, the command deployed security personnel to the university. On arrival at the gate, the detachment of policemen met a hostile crowd, who fired shots at them.

"The police had to use reasonable force to contain the hostile protesters. In the ensuing melee, two police officers were injured, five police vehicles vandalised and the protesters attacked the Amassoma Police Division," the statement said.

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