Bloody cult clash claims 16 lives in A/Ibom over parks control

From **Ayoyinka Jegede**, Uyo

ABOUT 16 persons were killed and property worth millions vof naira destroyed, following three days of bloody clashes between the Klaans and Black Axe confraternities, who engaged each other, over control of mini bus parks in Uyo, the Akwa Ibom State capital.

The Guardian gathered, yesterday, that the crises, which started at Idu, in Uruan Local Council, spread to local communities of Use Offot, Ekpri Nsukara, and Oniong communities in Uyo Local Council, with several people with varying degrees of injuries, hospitalised in nearby hospitals.

It was learnt that trouble started when the rival cult groups engaged each other in a fierce fight on Sunday, over alleged encroachment into some parks earmarked for a different group to collect parking tolls, forcing reaction from the opposing group.

Narrating their ordeals, Nora Iwang and Aniefiok Usen, both residents at the Nwanibba area, the epicentre of the cults fight, said, they had to sleep with relations and friends outside the area, following distressed calls from frightful neighbours around Udo Ekpo Nkpo Street.

"Thank God, I finally arrived at my house this morning (Tuesday) after my friends called me on Monday evening to sleep elsewhere and not to return for fear of being killed by the rampaging armed hoodlums," Iwang lamented.

"My wife called me at about 7:50p.m. on Monday, that I should not return home because of ongoing killings around my area in Udo Ekpo Nkpo Street and the adjoining areas of Nwanibba, Ekpri Nsukara, Eniong Offot and Use Offot communities. I had to take refuge at my sister's place off Abak road till this morning, Tuesday," Usen said.

Another resident, Emem Duncan, said: "Throughout last three days, we've been staying indoors from 6:00p.m. because of the fight and the Police operatives would only mount the guard on major roads, harrasining ordinary unarmed civilians without going into the villages to confront the real culprits."