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Seven feared dead in renewed cults' clashes in Delta community

Posted by: Shola O'NEIL , Regional Editor, South-south and Bolaji OGUNDELE, Warri in News 3 days ago

ENERHEN Community in Uvwie area of Delta State was in the grip of fresh tension yesterday following the escalation of bloody clashes between rival cult groups, which has led to no fewer than seven deaths since Sunday evening. Although the state police command denied cult hostilities in the area, various sources told The Nation that the people of the area have been living in fear after rival cult groups intensified counter-attacks .

A source who is familiar with the development said trouble started on Monday, when a member of one of the cult groups, stabbed someone to death on Enerhen Road which links the community and Effurun and Udu area of the state. The attack and death of the stabbed person stirred the anger of his comrades, who regrouped and went after the aggressor-gang.

The source said further that while fleeing from superior gun power of opponents, they accosted a fisherman returning home at the riverside and ordered him at gunpoint to ferry them in his boat across the river. "As they were going, those that were chasing them got closer and started shooting at them.

This led to panic and the boat then capsized. The fisherman jumped into the river and swam away; one or two swam to safety, others could not make it and four of them died there. "That episode had started a cult war, leading to attacks and counter-attacks. Yesterday (Thursday), two more corpses were retrieved from the river, around a private jetty there. Two other persons were shot dead; one was shot in the belly, another in the mouth.

The second one died while he was being rushed to the hospital", the source revealed. But the Police Public Relations Officer of the Delta state police command, Celestina Kalu (DSP), said : "There's no report like that. I've asked about that information, they said it's not true, I've asked the DPO Enerhen, he said there's nothing like that. He only talked of a corpse they found on the water, floating and then there was somebody that was shot the other day.

"So anything like cult clash, eight corpses is not true, that is unfounded now. You know that kind of thing cannot be hidden, it's not true", she said ,adding that one arrest had been made in respect of a shooting that occurred on the 28th of September", she said. Nevertheless, residents of the area contradicted the police' all-is-well claim.

A source said people living around the scene and the Old Enerhen Police Station area have imposed dusk-to-dawn curfew on themselves to avoid being caught in the crossfire.

"As I am talking to your now some of the boys are demonstrating using keke (tricycle) and they are coming into the community from the Okorodudu Junction area of Effurun Sapale road," another source added. At the time of this report yesterday afternoon, a team of military men from the Joint Task Force had moved in again following another round of skirmish in the community

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