

Three killed as soldiers clash with 'cultists' in Rivers

• 20 suspects arrested

SOLDIERS have killed two suspected leaders of Iceland Cult group in Ubima, the home town of Transport Minister, Rotimi Amaechi, in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State.

Twenty suspects were arrested during the two-day raid on suspected cult hotspots.

There have been clashes between two suspected cult groups - Iceland and Degbam - in Ubima, in the last six months.

The two groups are said to be responsible for incessant kidnapping and killings in the area.

From Precious Dikewoha,
Port Harcourt

It was learnt that when soldiers entered the community in 10 Hilux vans, they were confronted by the hoodlums, which led to the clash.

The suspected cultists reportedly ran into the bush when they could not match the firepower of the soldiers.

Some residents hailed the military for ridding the community of the hoodlums.

A community leader, Mr. Christopher Amadi, said the

military was sent from Abuja to secure the community during the Yuletide.

He said: "The community would like the military to stay more than a week in this community. Some cult members and one of their strongest leaders escaped during the raid. They will come back to terrorise us, if the military leaves the community."

A member of the Community Development Committee (CDC), Lawrence Dike, said the community was happy about

the military raid.

He recalled that residents had been at the mercy of the suspected cultists in the last six months.

According to him, the residents had lost their freedom since the suspected cultists took over the community.

But the Army Public Relations Officer (PRO) of the 2 Brigade in Port Harcourt, Capt Eli Lazarus, said he was not aware of the military raid at Ubima.

He promised to brief the reporter as soon as he confirmed the incident with his commander.

He did not call back last night.

'I'll ensure better life for Niger Delta residents'