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2 Two die in clash by rival gangs

TWO persons have been reported dead in a clash between rival gangs at Ondewari, a coastal settlement in Southern Ijaw Local Government Area of Bayelsa State.

NAN reports that some residents fled and observed the New Year in hiding.

A resident and renowned environmentalist, Mr Alagoa Morris, told NAN that the community had been deserted since the crisis of December 30.

According to him, two persons were killed last July in similar clashes.

Morris urged security agencies to intervene and restore peace to the community.

"Our pain is that this crisis was avoidable; the community leadership had cried out to state government and drew the attention of the

security agencies to the raging issues bordering on pipeline surveillance jobs at oilfields in the area but nothing happened.

"The situation would have been nipped in the bud, but here we are, four youths have been lost to the oil industry induced conflict that has left the community in a mourning mood."

According to him, efforts are on to resolve the crisis.

Chief Peresho Erefawari, acting paramount ruler decried the frequent clashes by gangs and urged the government to halt the bloodshed.

"The clash was caused by protest by some youths in the community who are aggrieved over their exclusion in the petroleum pipeline protection jobs in the area."

"We have tried in vain to broker truce so that peace will prevail but to no avail," he said.

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