

One dead as security agents storm Delta community

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The police last night confirmed the death of one person in Saturday's joint security operation in the oil-rich Ugborodo community, Warri South-West council area of Delta State. But community sources said two persons were killed.

Some properties were destroyed, including that of the Olaja-Orori (Spiritual Head) of the community, Benson Dube Omadeli, and the youth chairman, Ofe Nene, who had been declared wanted by security agents over a previous crisis in the community, which claimed a life.

Crisis in Ugborodo has become interminable, all resulting from who controls the leadership offices and financial resources of the host community to most of the oil giant, Chevron Nigeria Limited (CNL) multi-billion dollars facility as well as the 'suspended' multi-billion dollars Gas Revolution Industrial Park (GRIP), in Ogidigben.

However, last Saturday's military operation, which was jointly carried out by men of the Nigerian Army, the police and the Department of State Security (DSS), was reportedly targeted at some elements within the

community, who had been running rings of oil theft, kidnapping and other criminal activities.

A statement by the Delta police command's spokesman, Andrew Aniamaka (DSP), said the operation was in the interest of the community, saying it was raised "to rid the areas of hoodlums, who use them as bases for various nefarious activities, which include militancy, illegal oil bunkering and oil pipeline vandalism".

The Ologbotsere of Warri Kingdom, Chief Ayiri Emami, denied having a hand in the military action.

He said: "The people that are alleging are in Ugborodo, is Ugborodo not our community? Is it meant for bunkerers or kidnappers? Call anybody in Ugborodo, everybody is happy now in Ugborodo now, the police are here. Those were people exchanging gunshots with the police. Am I a soldier, how could I have joined them (security forces)?

"I am not a soldier that someone will be telling you that I led the army into Ugborodo. I'm the Ologbotsere, if something is happening in my domain, I have the duty to come and see what is actually happening and I am here and found out that the police are keeping peace, returning everybody that had been driven out of the community, which is they are to protect lives and property", Emami said.

The Commander, Operation Delta Safe, Rear Admiral Suleiman Apoche, said his men were there to ensure law and order while the police moved in.

“The Police went in there. We only provided security for law and order. I am also not aware there was fracas,” he said.