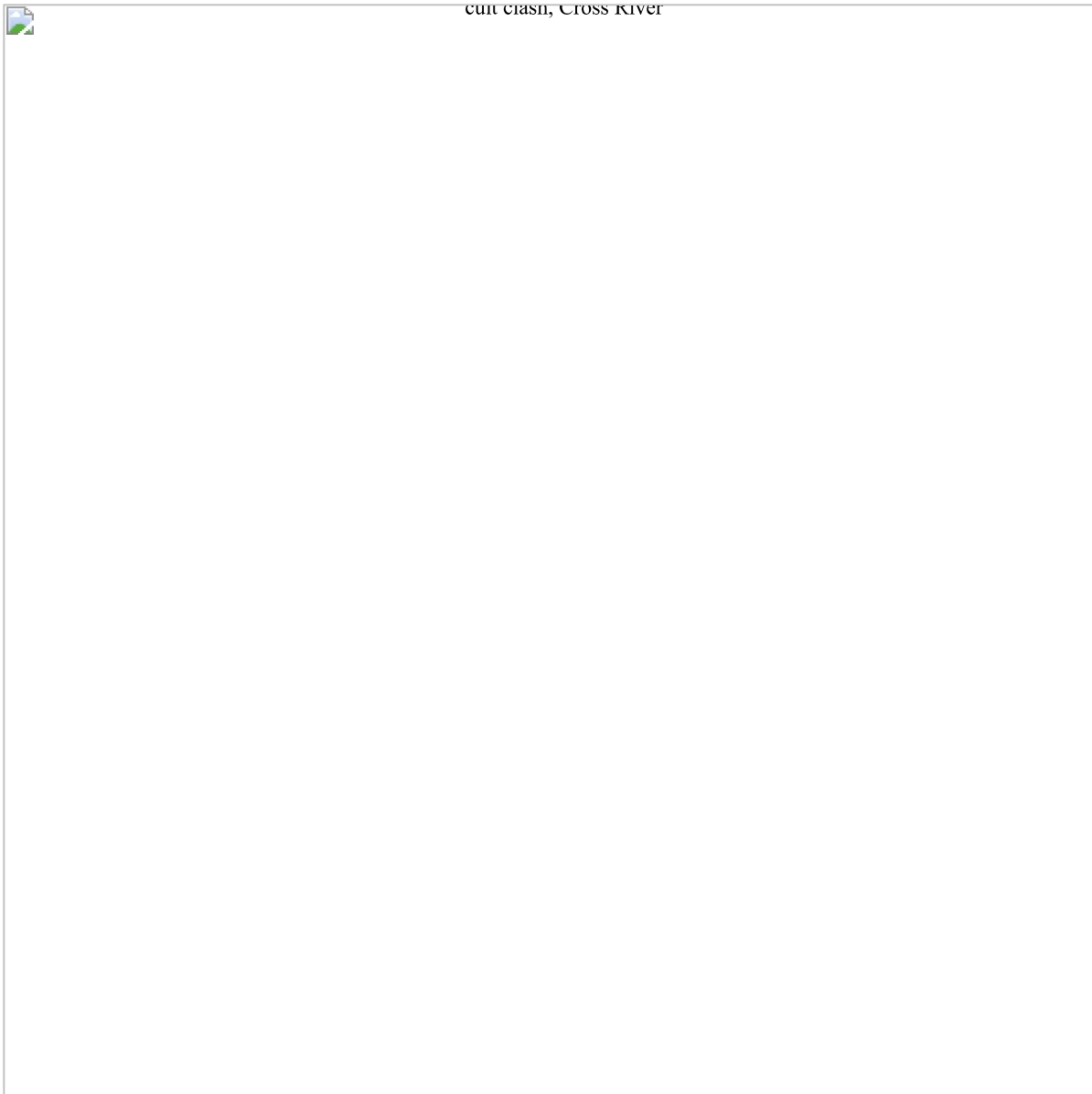


# Renewed Cult Clash Claims 15 Lives In Cross River

By 'Suyi Ayodele On May 14, 2021

METRO



A renewed cult clash among three dreaded cult groups in Akpabuyo/Bakassi Local Government Area of Cross River State has led to the death of not fewer than 15 suspected cultists, with many others fatally injured.

Nigerian Tribune gathered that the clash, which started on Monday among the cult groups: Skyro, Mafia and Black Scorpion, had been a recurrent decimal in the locality as the group battle for supremacy.

The activities of these groups, it was further gathered, led to many of the residents abandoning their homes to seek refuge somewhere else, while the cultist had field days, as economic and social activities in the area remained paralysed.

A source in the locality, who did not want his name in prints, told journalists that the activities of the cult group had become worrisome and called for the intervention of security operatives.

“This time, the operation was bloody. Imagine one of the suspected cult group took their members to a local charm doctor to prepare bulletproof charm and when they tested it by shooting one of them, he died on the spot,” the source volunteered.

He added that the suspected cultists destroyed some houses and other properties worth millions of naira in the area.

While the Deputy Police Public Relations Officer, Igri Ewa, told journalists the command had not been briefed on the cult activities in the area, the chairman of Bakassi Local Government Area, Iyadim Iyadim, however, confirmed the incident, regretting the actions of the cult groups.

“There are lots of killings in the area. It’s cult-related but I have not heard of the destruction of houses.

“The last boy who died, his colleagues took him for charm preparation, to prepare charm for them so that bullets and other dangerous weapons will not penetrate their body,” Iyadim said.

“When he was put on trial, to ascertain the efficacy of the charm, he was shot and he died. That cult group lost three persons coupled with the ones the rival group killed.

“Up to 10 persons have been killed and the operations started last two months and extended to this month (May); that is March, April and May”, the Bakassi council boss added.

“We have reported the matter to the government and on Tuesday, we had a security meeting with the governor,” he stated.

Iyadim further explained that his local government had no operational base as the secretariat was destroyed during the #EndSARS protests in 2020.

“Not even a ruler or pin was left. What was left was for them to put fire in the local government secretariats, so nothing is left”, Iyadim lamented.

He added that the soldiers, who were in the locality before, had been withdrawn and redeployed to other areas, just as the cultists ransacked police stations in the area.

According to him, “the security agencies are afraid as they (cultists) used charms and have adopted a measure of going to operate in large numbers to attack the military post and police station.

“The charm will make the security operatives either fall asleep or make them not to see them as they approach. We are in trouble.”

On his part, the Security Adviser, South-South, Henry Okokon, said the state government had put a lot of security measures in place across the state and appealed to the individual community to be on the lookout for criminals and alert security agencies promptly.

He also urged the communities to form their own vigilante groups to support what the government had put in place.

“Before things get out of hands, proactive measures should have been put in place. If you have these children as cultists and they are troubling people in that community, just let the security agencies know. We have chiefs and traditional rulers in those places. The government had met with them, asking them to fish out all these dangerous boys or inform us”, he said.

Okokon reiterated that the security measures put in place had started to achieve the desired goals, with the level of peace in Calabar, the state capital, and the adjoining towns.

“There is no more kidnapping because of the intensive security check and they now go beside the riverine areas where there are creeks, where two minutes you are in the creeks and they go there to do the kidnapping.

“The Chiefs in Akpabuyo and Bakassi know these boys. We have told them that if you know these boys tell us, we shall pick them and take them to the correctional centre for them to rest there for a while.

“Be it as it may, we shall storm Akpabuyo and Bakassi and embark on house to house search with a view to fetching out these boys and hoodlums,” he assured.