

# Four die in Bayelsa cult war

**Bisi Olaniyi**  
**BAYELSA**

**B**ARELY 72 hours after 12 persons lost their lives in a shoot-out between suspected militants and men of the Joint Task Force in Ekeremor Local Government Area of Bayelsa State, four persons were killed in the state in a cult war on Wednesday night.

Three alleged male cultists and an innocent woman, who was hit by a stray bullet, are the latest victims of the face-off between two rival cult groups at Onopa, Yenagoa, in their fight for supremacy.

The incident occurred around 8 pm in the busy area of the state capital, near Creek Haven (Government House), sending residents

scampering to safety, away from sporadic gunshots.

Corpses of two of the victims, the innocent woman and one of the boys, had been deposited at the morgue of the Federal Medical Centre, Yenagoa.

Efforts made by our correspondent to confirm the names of the four victims, both at Onopa and FMC were unsuccessful, but a resi-

dent doctor at the hospital, who craved anonymity, said two of the corpses were deposited at the morgue on Wednesday night.

The names of the cult groups involved in the latest clash could also not be ascertained as at press time, as so many cult groups had of recent been involved in bloody shoot-outs in the state.

The Police Public Relations Officer, Bayelsa State Command, Mr. Ibokette Iniobong, a deputy superintendent of police, confirmed the death of the four persons on Thursday.

Iniobong said that six persons had so far been arrested in connection with the incident and were helping the police in their investigations.

He said that those found guilty would face the full wrath of the law, to serve as a deterrent to others.

Imploring Bayelsa people to give information to the police about criminals in their midst, the PPRO added that there would be no hiding place for cultists and other criminals.

He gave the assurance that the informants' identities would be protected.

## Firms allege shady deals in ministry contracts

**John Ameh**  
**ANAMBRA**

**F**IRMS which bid for contracts for the procurement of power equipment for installation by the Ministry of Power and Steel on Thursday called for a probe into the alleged shady distribution of the jobs.

The firms, claiming that some of their competitors were unduly favoured, urged the Due Process Office in the Presidency to intervene in the matter by either reviewing or

in spite of paying the same tender fee of N1m each.

According to Clark, five foreign firms (names withheld) were the most favoured in the allocation of the bids.

He said, "We feel that something went wrong somewhere; hence, we believe that there was no transparency in the allocation of bids or lots for the projects.

"If nothing is done to reverse this injustice, it then im-

plies that there is no more due process in the award of contracts, especially big projects, by the Federal Government.

However, when the reactions of the Head of Public Affairs, Budget Monitoring and Price Intelligence Unit (Due Process Unit), Mr. Orji Ogonnaya Orji, were sought, he said that it was still early for the firms to complain of having been short-changed.

Although he confirmed that the unit was aware of the procurements by the power ministry, he nevertheless said that the Due Process Unit had not received a detailed report on the matter.

Orji advised the firms to be patient and allow the ministry to complete its own part of the award process, after which it would forward a report to the unit for its verification and certification.

## ASUP boss urges National Assembly to pass NPC bill

**Fidelis Soriwei**

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government.