

10 killed in Ogoni clashes

Stories: **Soni Daniel,**
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NO fewer than 10 persons were feared killed in two separate clashes in two Ogoni communities in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State on Tuesday.

○ Eyewitnesses said eight persons were killed in a communal clash involving the people of Beera and B-Dere communities.

The fight over the ownership of a parcel of land broke out between the two neighbouring communities on

Monday night and by Tuesday morning it had degenerated into a free-for all.

An indigene of B-Dere said that the fight was intense as at Tuesday afternoon and that more people might have been killed and their corpses taken away.

He said that the confrontation could have been avoided if the law enforcement agents had moved in when the matter first broke out last week.

One of the victims was identified as a close associate of a top politician in the area

and member of a local cult group not very popular outside the local government area.

○ The second clash at Bodo City was reportedly triggered by an attempt by members of the Dewell Cult group to carry out a reprisal attack on their Degabm rivals, whom they accused of attacking and killing some of their members the previous week.

→ In the confrontation, two persons suspected to be active cult members were killed.

The incidents forced the Rivers State Police Command to deploy scores of riot policemen in the area to check the escalation of attacks and secure lives and property of innocent persons.

The Police Public Relations Officer for the state, Mrs. Ireju Barasua, told our correspondent in an interview that policemen had been moved from the Police Area Command in Bori to the affected communities.

Barasua, a deputy superintendent of police, said that the matter started as a minor disagreement but that she did not know when it degenerated to the killing of persons.

Chairman of Gokana Local Government Area, Chief Fred Kpakol, who was contacted on the phone around 3pm on Tuesday, said that he was in a meeting and could not talk to the press. He assured that he would talk later but he did not do so as at press time.

Bodo has been under constant attacks by cultists believed to be loyal to politicians and no fewer than 30 persons have so far been killed in the series of attacks.

Fuel scarcity bites harder in Rivers

THE fuel scarcity, which resurfaced in Port Harcourt, the Rivers State capital, has refused to go away, barely two weeks after Christmas and the New Year.

Findings by our correspondent revealed that most filling stations in the capital had been without products for over a month while those with the products had taken advantage of the scarcity to engage in malpractices for quick gains.

Although the major marketers have not openly increased their pump prices, they are more inclined to sell their products to hawkers who have sprung up by the stations and are making brisk business.

It was observed that although the stations complained of lack of products to dispense to the public, the unofficial market operators near their stations had enough fuel to sell.

Most of the hawkers claimed that scarcity had created an avenue for them to make money and prayed that it should continue as the government had since stopped providing employment for them.

As at Tuesday afternoon, only three stations along Port Harcourt-Aba Expressway were selling products to consumers while two on the Station-Township Road were opened.

The development led to the emergence of a large crowd at the affected stations and blockade of the two main roads in Port Harcourt for most part of the day.

As a result, many motorists had to park their cars and trek to their destinations while others waited for hours on the roadside to board commercial buses to their offices.

But most commercial buses were also off the road, leading to the presence of a few vehicles on the streets.