

Nine killed in Bayelsa communal clash

Bisi Olaniyi, Yenagoa

THE clash between the riverine people of Egweama and Liama in Brass Local Government Area of Bayelsa State has so far claimed the lives of nine persons, with two of the corpses recovered and buried.

The Commanding Officer of the Naval Base at Egweama, Commander Austin Eluwa, confirmed the casualty figure during a visit to the warring communities on Sunday evening.

Egweama-Mugho, a satellite community, popularly referred to as Egweama-2, was razed by aggrieved youths from Liama last

NDDC carpets oil companies over annual earnings

Chukwudi Akasike, Uyo

THE Niger Delta Development Commission has reprimanded oil and gas companies for refusing to remit three per cent of their annual earnings to it.

The commission alleged that most of the oil and gas companies deliberately refused to pay the statutory sum to it while others slashed the amount accruing to the NDDC by 15 per cent.

The chairman of the commission, Mr. Sam Edem, explained in Uyo on Monday that though the NDDC had sued such companies, it later settled out of court.

Saturday.

The place is now deserted and natives have become refugees in neighbouring communities of Yenagoa and Port Harcourt.

The crisis resulted from a protracted dispute over an oil bearing parcel of land between the two communities, whose people had earlier agreed to share the proceeds from oil exploration and exploitation activities into equal parts.

The immediate cause of the current clash, according to the Chairman of Egweama Council of Chiefs, Chief Opalimogha Basoute, was a badge that was being escorted to an oil rig at the disputed land

efit from the 40 solar-controlled water project embarked upon by the commission.

The NDDC chairman explained that the state had experienced minimal militant attacks because the commission had tried to carry the militants along in the area of infrastructural development and youth employment.

He called on journalists to always support the commission through effective reportage of its activities, noting that the NDDC was determined to provide a lasting solution to the problem of underdevelopment in the Niger Delta region.

which was stopped.

The spokesman of Liama, Chief Loveday Oyefiekuma, said that the land in dispute was known as Nunumafie.

He admitted that Liama youths over-reacted by seizing the tug boat, stating that one of the community's youths was still missing.

Bayelsa State Deputy Governor, Mr. Peremobowei Ebebi, who visited the warring communities on Sunday evening, urged the people of Egweama and Liama to embrace dialogue as the only means of settling dispute, rather than taking the law into their hands.

Ebebi said that the chiefs, elders and youths of the communities were expected to complement government's efforts in enthroning peace in the state, urging them not to allow the crisis to escalate.

While at Egweama, the deputy governor lauded the people for not launching a reprisal attack on the Liama community.

He said Odi and Odioma's experiences should serve as a deterrent to troublesome communities, noting that the state government would map out strategies to ensure lasting peace in the area.

Ebebi also visited the naval base at Egweama, where he told the commanding officer to ensure the security of lives and property.

Militants reportedly kidnapped