

# Four killed, two flow stations blown up in Delta

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**T**HE crisis in Ekpan, Uvwie Local Government Area of Delta State worsened at the weekend when four people were killed and scores injured.

The killings on Friday and Saturday coincided with the blowing up of two Nigeria Agip Oil Company flow stations in Burutu by unknown persons.

Our correspondent gathered on Sunday that those injured in the crisis which began three weeks ago were receiving treatment in different medical centres in Ekpan, Effurun and Warri.

The crisis stemmed from the intrigues associated with the election of the executive of Ekpan Youth Association and the community leadership.

Some youths had opposed an alleged move by a popular youth leader in the community to impose his surrogates on the body.

The dissenting youths, under the aegis of Ekpan Stakeholders Group, had alleged that the youth leader also planned to become the chairman of the community's development association.

A source told our correspondent that some members of the group and those believed to be supporters of the youth leader engaged in a free-for-all on Friday and Saturday, leading to the deaths and infliction of injuries on many others.

He claimed that the two sides lost one person each, while stray bullets killed two unidentified persons.

The President of ESG, Mr. Patrick Omar, was said to be one of the injured.

Another source however said that Governor Dr. Emmanuel Uduaghan, has ordered the police authorities in the state to arrest the suspected masterminds of the crisis.

An aide to the governor, who disclosed this on Saturday, said his boss was of the opinion that the arrest of the masterminds would help in restoring law and order to the community.

The aide, who also confirmed the casualty figures, said Uduaghan was desirous of restoring peace to all parts of the state.

Meanwhile, two flow stations

located off Forcados in Burutu Local Government of the state were on Saturday night blown up by unknown persons.

A government source told our correspondent that the well heads and jackets immediately caught fire.

Sources at the 93 Battalion, Effurun, the headquarters of the Joint Task Force in the Niger Delta, said the agency suspected that some people in Odimodi and Ogulagha communities were responsible for the attack.

The position of the authorities of JTF was reportedly premised on unresolved differences between indigenes of the communities and the management of NAOC.

One of the sources said, "We have a strong reason to suspect people from Odimodi or Ogulagha because of their problems with the management of NAOC.

"Loud explosions were heard at around 10pm in Beniboye and the oil wells are on fire on Sunday afternoon."

It was learnt that Uduaghan had summoned the leadership of Odimodi and Ogulagha and

the management of NAOC to a meeting in Warri on Monday (today).

It was also learnt on Sunday that four Americans and a Nigerian arrested by the JTF in the state for alleged espionage have been handed over to the State Security Service in Abuja.

A source in JTF said that the five men were interrogated at the SSS headquarters on Sunday afternoon.

The National Coordinator of the Ijaw Monitoring Group, Mr. Joseph Evah, has, however, condemned the arrest of the five men.

Evah described the Nigerian, Mr. Joel Bisina, as a responsible Ijaw leader, who had brought development to the Niger Delta through his relationship with foreign governments and international bodies.

He said Bisina facilitated the establishment of a library in Oporoza, the headquarters of Gbaramatu Kingdom in Delta State, with the assistance of the Americans.

He therefore called for their immediate and unconditional release describing their detention as unjustifiable.