

Community demands \$500m compensation for oil spill

THE Ibeno Community in Akwa Ibom, has given the management of Mobil Producing Nigeria a two-week ultimatum to pay 500 million dollars compensation for damages caused by oil spills between February 2008 and December 2009, News Agency of Nigeria reports.

The MPN, an affiliate of the U.S. oil firm ExxonMobil, reported that a leak on a pipeline on Dec. 4, caused the discharge of unknown volume of crude oil into the Atlantic Ocean.

Subsequently, deposits of crude oil suspected to be from the Qua Iboe Oil Fields were noticed along the Atlantic shoreline in Ibeno, near Eket last week.

According to NAN, the oil firm, in a letter dated December 17, the Ibeno Clan Council, decried frequent oil spills at the Qua Iboe Oil Field and the resultant pollution of the environment.

The letter was signed by the Secretary to the council, Chief Herkings Inyang and the Speaker, Ibeno Council of Chiefs, Dr. Effiong Archiang.

It stated, "while we were condoling ourselves and trying to recover from the losses of the February 2008 oil spill, we are again confronted with yet another oil spill of great magnitude which occurred in the early days of December.

"It is obvious that the incessant occurrence of oil spills on our waters is a dangerous threat to our major source of livelihood, it also questions the sincerity of MPN in safeguarding our environment from avoidable pollution in the course of their operation."

The community also complained that it had suffered several times from pipeline failures and challenged the integrity of the pipeline network at the Qua Iboe Oil fields.

Police deny killing at Oshodi fracas

THE Lagos State Police Command has denied responsibility for the death of a man during a fracas between two rival transport unions at Oshodi on Monday night.

The command's spokesman, Mr. Frank Mba, told the News Agency of Nigeria on Tuesday that the man could have died from injuries he sustained during the fight.

"Some persons were fighting at Oshodi and dangerous weapons, including guns and cutlasses, were freely used. How can people blame the police for the killing?" he said.

Mba did not confirm any arrest but said normalcy had been restored to the area.



•L-R: Managing Director, MOTAFCO Ltd, Hajiya Talatu Shehu; Director, College of Administrative Studies and Social Sciences, Kaduna Polytechnic, Dr. Asma'u Maikudi; and the wife of Kaduna State Governor, Hajiya Amina Sambo, at a meeting on preparation for free eye surgery in the state, in Kaduna...on Monday. Photo: NAN.

Bauchi: Police arrest 20 suspects, security agents fear spread of violence

Olusola Fabiyi, Abuja

THE police on Tuesday said it has arrested 20 suspects in connection with the sectarian crisis that erupted in Bauchi metropolis on Monday.

Force Public Relations Officer, Mr. Emmanuel Ojukwu who announced the arrests in a statement explained that the crisis resulted from a disagreement between the leader of Kala-Kato sect, Mallam Badamasi and some of his former disciples.

Ojukwu's statement came on the heels of security reports that the crisis rocking Bauchi State may spread to Kaduna and Zaria if immediate proactive measures are not taken.

The police spokesman said, "The timely intervention of the state command abruptly apprehended the situation from generating."

He said the police in its efforts to unravel the mystery behind the mayhem arrested 20 suspects, in whose possession two AK-47 rifles, bomb making explosive, 73 knives, gunpowder and some rounds of ammunition were recovered.

Ojukwu also said four houses were burnt during the crisis while 38 persons, including one soldier, who was until his death a member of the state security outfit, Operation Flush.

He said the police were able to rescue 16 captives from the enclave of Mallam Badamasi.

The statement added that the Inspector General of Police, Mr. Ogbonna Onovo, has put all the state commands of the police at red alert to forestall the spread of the crisis.

Our correspondent gathered that security reports prepared by some security agencies had indicated that the dreaded religious group popularly called the shites, have already started gathering in the two cities of Kaduna State.

Though our correspondent learnt that Bauchi is now calm, it was gathered that the regrouping of the shites in the neighbouring

state of Kaduna could be more devastated if not nib in the bud early enough.

A security source said, "Yes, it is true that the Bauchi State is boiling now. But what we have had in the state will amount to a child play to what will happen in Kaduna and Zaria if adequate actions are not taking."

"As I speak with you now, the shites are regrouping in these two cities. The state government is aware of the threat, yet noting is being done about it."

"We need to be proactive in whatever we do and that is what

...Crisis caused by sect leader's illness – Bauchi CP

It has been discovered that an undiagnosed strange illness of the late leader of the Kala-kato Islamic religious sect, Mallam Badamasi was the cause of the crisis that engulfed Zango area of Bauchi metropolis claiming 38 lives last Monday.

This was made public by the Bauchi State Police Commissioner, Atiku Yusuf Kafur while briefing news men on the crisis in his office late Monday evening, saying that it was in the cause of looking for a solution to the ailment that the late Militant leader made enmity with some of his followers who were said to be plotting to kill him and take over the affair of the sect by one of his ardent followers.

While giving a background to the genesis of the riot, the Bauchi CP said that "it all began when

we did not do that led to the crisis in Borno and other states the other time. You know hundreds of people were killed during the Boko Haram matter?"

"Now, another one is staring us in the face and nothing is being done about it. We do not have to state more than this at least those concerned will know that there is no hiding place for them."

The source added that it would be foolhardy of the government to claim that it was not notified of the suspicious movements of the members of

this set in the two cities.

Meanwhile, there was a security meeting in Bauchi State on Tuesday where the crisis that rocked the state capital was discussed.

The Commissioner of Police in the state, Mr. Atiku Kafur was said to be at the meeting when our correspondent called him.

His aide, who picked the call, said he would not know how long the meeting would take "because it was a serious one."

The Police however claimed that normalcy had been restored to the state.

the DPO of Dutsen-Tanshi Police Station got a report that the leader of the sect, one Mallam Badamasi preached a message that was considered heretic by his neighbours and were not at ease about it considering that it can lead to crisis.

Yusuf Kafur added that from the report reaching him, it was later discovered that Badamasi who is an indigene of Alkali LGA in Bauchi State preached out of frustration due to a strange illness he was suffering from and could not get immediate cure for.

He said, "He (Badamasi) was advised to consult the wife of one of his followers to get a cure for his illness which he did and the woman told him that his affliction was caused by some of his followers who plot to kill him and so for him to get cured he must get rid of them".

According to him, the discovery brought a division in the sect while some left, others stayed with the sect leader adding that the inciting message Badamasi preached that fateful day was an attack on his enemies which led some of the residents to report the sect leader to men of the Operation Flush, a military outfit which drafted six soldiers to the scene and tried to stop the preaching, Kafur added.

Unfortunately, according to the Police boss, the rampaging militants killed one soldier on the spot and took his ak47 rifle loaded with ammunition after which the group then retreated and started fighting each other a development which later extended to other members of the society.

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Soludo says INEC needs prayers, alleges plans to rig Anambra poll

Emmanuel Obe, Awka

THE candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party in the February 6, 2010 governorship election in Anambra State, Prof. Chukwuma Soludo, on Tuesday said the Independent National Electoral Commission requires prayers to conduct the poll in the state.

Soludo said this even as he said he has received information that some people were planning to manipulate the election.

Speaking on Viewpoint, a Purity FM, Awka Radio Nigeria programme, on Tuesday,

Soludo said that he has been told of plans to bring in thugs to subvert the election.

"We heard that people are buying voters' cards. If somebody is buying voters' cards, then you can only know the desperation of the people involved."

"People are trying to subvert the election, to try to bring in thugs. We can only pray for INEC and support INEC in order to get a free and fair election," he said.

The former Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria said that the attack on the PDP had been

vitriolic because it is the only party on the ground.

He said, "Everybody is attacking PDP because it is the party to beat. If you allow free and fair election, PDP will win with a landslide."

But he said the PDP was the only party that had the best chance of taking the people of Anambra State and indeed the Igbo people to the mainstream of the Nigerian polity.

"All the other parties are just fragments of the PDP. All the candidates of note in other parties had sought nomination initially on the platform of the PDP," he

Cultism: Two die during initiation

Mike Odiegwu, Calabar

TWO youths in Ugep, Yakur Local Government Area of Cross River State have reportedly died during an initiation ceremony of an occultic fraternity in the state.

Sources told our correspondent that the two males were believed to have been murdered in a violent ceremony that was held for new members in Nkori-Nkpa axis of the council by the group on Sunday night.

When our correspondent visited the community on Monday morning, it was found that most people were still oblivious of the incident.

But there was palpable fear in the afternoon when information about the activities of the cult group was circulated in the council area.

Sources from the community said one of the corpses of the victims was picked up along the road and conveyed to an undisclosed mortuary by the police.

The victim whose remains were said to have been deposited in the mortuary was identified as Igbor Igbor, 27, and only son of his parents.

Our correspondent gathered that the second victim was believed to have been buried in a concealed grave in the forest.

It was further learnt that the Chairman of the Council, Mr. Ubi Eta was agitated by the incident and had immediately ordered the police to unmask the identities of the perpetrators.

Already, it was gathered that the police were trailing one Mr. Item Oba, suspected to be the head of the group who was said to be at large.

Eta in an interview with our correspondent confirmed the incident and disclosed that the community vigilante group had arrested two suspected cultists in connection with the incident.

He said he was cooperating with the police to investigate the incidents adding that the council would no longer tolerate cultism.

Eta said he has not given up on the war against cultism declared earlier in the year by the state Governor, Mr. Liyel Imoke.

The Governor had, in the heat of cult clashes during which many were killed in the state, inaugurated a programme to stem the tide of cultism.

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