

Four killed as Benue vigilance group, bandits clash

**Benue Onche,
Makurdi**

TENSION is building up in the Okpokwu Local Government Area of Benue State, where four persons believed to be natives of Okpoga and Ingle have been killed in a clash between a gang of suspected armed robbers and members of the vigilance group in the area.

It was gathered that trouble started when the leader of the gang which had been terrorising Okpoga was arrested and detained at the police headquarters in Makurdi.

The bandits were

reported to have accused the vigilance group of reporting their leader to the police.

It was learnt that members of the gang killed a member of the vigilance group, thereby sparking off counter-offensive from the vigilante group, which allegedly killed one of the hoodlums.

On discovering that the deceased member of the vigilance group was a native of a nearby village called Ingle in Edumoga district, the people of the area were said to have attacked a commercial motorcyclist from Okpoga in Ingle.

In all, four persons were killed between Monday and Wednesday at the boundary between Okpoga, headquarters of Okpokwu LGA, and Ingle, a nearby village from Okpoga.

The Police Public Relations Officer of the Benue State Police Command, Moses Yamu, said four persons were killed in the area during the clashes.

Yamu added that six police patrol teams had been dispatched to the area to forestall further breakdown of law and order.

Yamu said the area commander in Otukpo

had been directed by the police commissioner to ensure that peace returned to the area.

He called on those fleeing their homes to return, saying the police had brought the situation under control.

Meanwhile, the Idoma socio-cultural group, the Opiatoha K'Idoma, has condemned the spate of killings going on in Okpokwu, expressing worry that peace was gradually eluding the once quite area with some hoodlums turning the place into a theatre of war.

In a statement by its President and Secretary-

General, Chief Baba Odangla and Chief Adoka Adaji, Opiatoha K'Idoma urged security agencies to fish out those behind the mayhem as a matter of urgency.

"There must be a stop to this anti-Idoma behaviour, hence the culprits should not be provided shelter by any group. We admonish our communities to live in peace with one another and eschew bitterness, the carnage in Agatu is still fresh in our memories to witness any form of violence in any part of Idoma land," the group said.

Saturday

THE MOST WIDELY READ NEWSPAPER

Increase your