

Cultists kill MEND leaders, chieftain in Rivers

Dennis Naku, Port Harcourt

THERE is tension in the Andoni Local Government Area of Rivers State as a leader of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta in the area, identified as Etengo Etengo, has been reportedly killed along with his second-in-command in an attack by suspected cultists.

It was gathered that while the Andoni MEND leader died following injuries inflicted on him by his attackers after over two hours of heavy shooting at the weekend, his ally, whose name could not be immediately ascertained as of the time of filing this report, was killed during a clash on Monday.

A security source in the area confirmed the killings, saying, "They were fighting among themselves and I think he (Etengo) was ambushed



• Rivers CP, Eboka Friday

and killed alongside his second-in-command. They are all cultists and they have

been killing people."

Meanwhile, tension has spread across communities

in Andoni as some residents have fled the mainly coastal area to safer towns nearby for fear of possible reprisals.

A resident of Andoni, who said he fled to Port Harcourt early on Monday because of the tension, added that some persons were seen taking speedboats to Port Harcourt as a result of the shooting and the consequent killings.

In a separate development, gunmen have kidnapped a chieftain of the All Progressives Congress, Hyacinth Nwiye, in the Khana Local Government Area of the state.

Nwiye, who is the caretaker committee chairman of the Khana Local Government Area, was abducted from his home on Easter Sunday.

Though details on how he was abducted were still sketchy, the spokesman for the APC in the state, Ogbonna Nwuke, confirmed the incident in a statement issued on Tuesday.

Nwuke appealed to the

kidnap APC

abductors to release the party chieftain unconditionally.

The statement read, "The APC observed that the action of those, who are still holding the caretaker committee chairman of Khana hostage without any trace, has confirmed that ordinary citizens resident in Rivers State are not safe.

"We have been briefed that he was taken into captivity at a time when well-meaning people were celebrating the resurrection of our Lord, the son of God. While the identities of the persons, who are currently holding him hostage, are not known, we have strong reasons to believe that the act was perpetuated against the backdrop of the inability of the Rivers State Government to guarantee appropriate security protection at the grassroots.

"We call on security agencies in the state to intensify the manhunt for those who are responsible for the sudden disappearance

of a law-abiding citizen."

When contacted, the spokesman for the state police command, Nnamdi Omoni, said he had yet to be briefed on the cult clash and killings, but promised to find out from the Divisional Police Officer in charge of Andoni, but had yet to give our correspondent a feedback as of the time of filing this report.

Italian Mafia

Ada Wodu, Calabar

THE Cross River State Police Command has paraded 34 suspects for various crimes such as armed robbery, kidnapping, cultism, burglary, child trafficking and vandalism.

The Commissioner of Police, Sikiru Akande, who paraded the suspects at the Police Command Headquarters in Calabar, on Tuesday, said they were arrested in March.

Among those paraded were members of a seven-man robbery gang said to be terrorising