

Police arrest 10 as cult clashes claim 12 in Ekiti, Akwa Ibom

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Ekiti State Commissioner of Police, Tunde Mobayo

No fewer than 12 persons died in clashes between rival cults in Ikere Ekiti, Ikere Local Government Area of Ekiti State, and in the Mbiabong Ikot Essien community, Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State between Saturday and Sunday.

Sources said the Ikere Ekiti clash followed the killing of a cult member on Saturday, which made members of the group to which he belonged carried out a reprisal on the rival group.

A source said, "We do not really know the cause of the clash, but what we can say is that the cult members held residents and motorists hostage as they were on a shooting spree on Sunday morning.

"What we gathered is that a member of a cult group was killed overnight by rival group members and there was a reprisal in the early hours of Sunday. As we speak, people have been able to count six dead bodies from the cult clash."

The Police Public Relations Officer in the state, Sunday Abutu, who confirmed the incident, said law enforcement agents had arrested 10 suspects in connection with the incident and more personnel had been deployed in the area to restore normalcy.

Abutu said, "There was a clash between rival cults early this morning (Sunday) in Ikere Ekiti. In the process, six persons lost their lives. Their corpses have been recovered and deposited in the morgue.

"Ten persons have been arrested as suspects in connection with the incident. Enough operatives have been deployed in that axis to maintain peace and tranquillity for now. Investigation is on, after that, we will know the real reason for the clash

“There is no problem anymore, people have started going about their lawful activities. Enough police operatives have been deployed there to maintain peace and calmness.

“Men of the Nigeria Police Force, Nigerian Army, Amotekun Corps and the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps have begun operations there.

“Those arrested are being kept in our custody and by the time we conclude our investigations, they will be charged accordingly.”

In Mbiabong Ikot Essien, no fewer than six persons were feared killed following a clash between suspected members of the Iron and Skin confraternities.

PUNCH Metro gathered that trouble started when a member of the Iron Confraternity allegedly beheaded a member of the Skin group, who later launched a reprisal on Saturday, but were resisted by members of the Iron Confraternity.

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It was learnt that six suspected cultists, three from each group, were killed during the reprisal attack.

The village head of Mbiabong Ikot Essien, Eteidung Hosea Okon, who confirmed the clash, disclosed that one person from his community was killed.

He said the suspected cultists invaded his residence and vandalised his property and wondered why some youths could engage in activities that would not make positive impact on their lives.

Okon stated, "As I was lying down in front of my house last night (Saturday) half asleep, the voice of my second son woke me up as I heard him shouting, 'mummy, mummy go inside'. My wife ran inside the house, leaving her phone outside. Then, I saw a group of boys, over 150 in number, some with machetes. I managed to get inside so that they would not harm me, but they started destroying my windows and doors. But one person from their group told them to stop and that was how they stopped vandalising my property.

"They were chanting: 'Boys are hungry, boys are hungry'. They also entered some homes and looted whatever they saw there.

"I called the police at Shelter Afrique on Saturday and informed them of the incident. This morning (Sunday), I went there to make an official report. I don't know what some boys are turning into. I learnt this morning that six of the youths died, that is three from each group. One of them, I learnt died, this morning in the hospital. He was cut with machete and he bled to death."

The Police Public Relations Officer in the state, SP Odiko Macdon, said he had yet to be briefed about the incident, but promised to investigate and update members of the public as soon as he received information on the clash.

"I have yet to be briefed on the killings. Immediately I receive information on the incident, I will inform you. But be assured that the Commissioner of Police, Andrew Amiengheme, will not relent in clamping down on cultists in the state," Macdon stated.