

Two killed, three pupils remanded for cultism in Rivers

DENNIS NAKU

Two persons have been killed following a renewed clash between rival cult groups in the Bonny Local Government Area of Rivers State

The names of the gangs could not be ascertained as of the time of filing this report.

But residents of the area called on the police to intervene over the violence.

It was learnt that the suspected cultists shot indiscriminately, forcing residents of the island to stay indoors to avoid being cut in the crossfire.

A representative of Concerned Indigenes of Bonny, Mr Christopher Pepple, said cult-related attacks had become prevalent in the area.

"It is very disheartening to come to terms with the fact that a local government that used to be peaceful in the state is fast becoming a den of criminals and cultism. The worst part of it is that the activities of these people seem to be backed by security agencies, particularly the police.

"The police authorities in Bonny are not doing enough to protect lives and property," he said.

Reacting to the killings, Secretary of Bonny LGA, Ralph Jamaica, in a statement condemned the incident, saying the council authorities would not tolerate, such anti-social activities capable of causing a breach of the peace.

The statement read in part, "It should be strongly noted that the local government under the administration of Dame Anengi Barasua will not tolerate by any way or manner, anti-social activities that are inimical to the peace and wellbeing of the people of Bonny LGA."

Meanwhile, four secondary school pupils have been remanded in the custody of Nkpolu Divisional Police Headquarters in Mile Three, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, over charges bordering on cultism.

The charge sheet deposed by Chief Magistrate Phillipa Dike-Udenna identified them as pupils of Community Secondary School, Nkpolu Oroworukwo, Mile Three, in Port Harcourt.

According to the charge sheet PMC 1478C, the suspects were members of the Deegbam cult group were said to have committed an offence punishable under Section 2(1) of the Secret Cult and Similar Activities Prohibition No 6 Laws of Rivers State of Nigeria."

The pupils were remanded in police custody till November 22 for proper arraignment as the magistrate did not sit.