

Police probe death of seven in Benue cult clash

27th February 2024

| By John Charles

 Police Public Relations Officer, Benue State Police Command, SP Catherine Anene

The Benue State Police Command has begun investigation into the rival cult clash that led to the death of no fewer than seven persons in the North Bank, a suburb of Makurdi, Benue State.

The severity of the clash, according to eyewitnesses, forced the market located around the area to close for business.

According to a source, who spoke to *PUNCH Metro*, the clash was between the “Black axe and Red axe” cult groups.

One of the eyewitnesses, the chairman of North Bank market, Comrade Cibilus Odinaka, who narrated how the crisis started, said one of the rival cultists came to the market to assess some products and the other people saw him and harassed him.

“He went back and told his friends and they came back to fight. That is how the whole issue started. Between that Saturday and today (Monday), six persons have been killed.

Despite the proximity of military barracks to the scene of the incident, Odinaka said this had not deterred the cultists to bare their fangs within the area.

He said, “The issue of barrack as far as we are concerned is completely useless. In fact, we do not have any military barracks within North Bank. Even the C Division, we don’t have anyone. Their response is usually very, very low.

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PUNCH Metro observes that two military barracks, Nigerian Army School of Military Engineering and Nigerian Army 72 barracks are located in the North Bank area.

A leader of vigilance group in the area, Nura Umah, who spoke to journalists, on Monday, said six cult members lost their lives adding that one okada rider was also killed during the clash.

He said, “Six cult members were killed during the clash, two from Red axe and four others from Black axe. Even the cultists went away with the head of one of the victims.

“Unfortunately, one okada man ran into the clash and was killed.”

He added that security operatives had been deployed to the area to stem the crisis.

This was confirmed by the Police Public Relations Officer of the state command, Catherine Anene, who revealed that officers had been deployed to the troubled area.

She said, “Report of cult activities in North Bank was reported and the command deployed police officers to take charge. Investigation is ongoing. I have no report of number of victims, please.”

| John Charles

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