

# Three arrested as cult clash claims lives in Rivers

3rd February 2025



 Map of Rivers State

 By Dennis Naku

No fewer than three people have been killed while three suspects were arrested in a fresh clash among rival cult groups in Onne in Eleme Local Government Area of Rivers State.

Though the names of the cult groups could not be identified, it was gathered that one of the groups had first launched an attack on the other, killing two on Friday, leading to a reprisal on Saturday.

The police said one of the notorious cultists identified as ‘Small Lighter’, who had been terrorising the area, was among the three killed in the clash.

It was gathered that some residents of the area fled due to sporadic shooting from the rival groups which shattered the serenity of the community.

The spokesperson for the state police command, Grace Iringe-Koko, confirmed the incident to our correspondent on Sunday afternoon.

Iringe-Koko said, “Yes, I can confirm the cult clash. Three persons were killed and three suspects were arrested.

“From the information available to me, one of the suspects called ‘Small Lighter’ who had been terrorising the Eleme area killed one person from the other cult. So, in retaliation, they went after him and killed him. One other was killed earlier, so, three persons in all.

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“Our men (police) have been deployed to the area and calm has been restored. An investigation is ongoing to fish out other fleeing suspects and ensure they are prosecuted,” she said.

Meanwhile, the Chairman of Eleme LGA, Brain Gokpa, has promised to assist the security operatives to ensure the arrest and prosecution of those behind the killings,

Gokpa, while reacting to the cult clash, however, called on the youths of Onne community to remain calm and refrain from taking laws into their hands.

He said, “Security agencies have been deployed to Onne. Everything is under control because we are working with the relevant security agencies. So, there is no need for panic.

“Let me also use this medium to advise Onne youths to be calm. Nobody should take the law into their hands as security agencies are on top of the situation.”

He commended the police and sister security agencies in the area for their prompt response to the disturbances and for displaying professionalism.