

# Rivers community deserted as cultists kill 19 residents

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Map of Rivers State

By Dennis Naku

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No fewer than 19 people were feared killed in a renewed cult clash in Obelle Community in Emohua Local Government Area of Rivers State on Sunday.

The development has sparked panic in the area as residents have deserted the community for safety.

It would be recalled that on Wednesday, unidentified gunmen believed to be members of a cult group invaded the community and killed seven people.

While the community was still reeling in the pain of the incident, on Sunday morning, the two cult groups in the area resumed their battle for supremacy after over two years of vacation.

It was gathered that the supremacy battle on Sunday was between the Deybam and Icelanders cult groups.

Our correspondent learnt that after the Wednesday killing, the group whose members were killed on Sunday invaded Obelle community and started attacking relatives of those perceived to be part of the cult group that earlier killed seven people.

A source in the area, who gave his name simply as Kingsley, alleged that it was while the group who lost their members on Wednesday was operating that the rivals arrived.

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Kingsley said, “On Sunday, cultists clashed in our community. Many people have been killed. Innocent people were killed. The shooting was too much and the people started leaving the community. About 19 people have been killed.

“On Sunday morning, some cultists came out and started shooting. They were attacking relatives of the people they said were members of the gang that killed their members. It did not take time, the other group came out. They started shooting themselves. People from the two groups also died.

“We are calling on the government to come to our aid. These cults are trying to scatter the people we have in this community. We want the police and army to help us.”

When contacted, the spokesperson for the state police command, Grace Iringe-Koko, confirmed the incident, saying the clash was linked to levies from an oil company in the area, saying the number of casualty was 10.

She stated, “It is a cult clash between loyalists of Naked Wire and Carol. They are fighting over the control of levies from an oil company operative in the area.

“About 10 confirmed dead. No arrest yet, but investigation is ongoing.”