

# Council chairman kidnapped in Rivers

• 2 killed, others injured as cult groups clash

From **Tony John**, Port Harcourt

**GUNMEN** have kidnapped the chairman of Okrika Local Government Area in Rivers State, Mr. Philemon Kingoli.

Kingoli, according to reports, was abducted and whisked away to an unknown destination at gunpoint by yet-to-be-identified gunmen, on Wednesday, along Peter Odili Road in Port Harcourt City Local Government Area of the state.

At the time of filing the report, it could not be ascertained the reason for abduction of the council chairman, as the gunmen had not contacted the victim's family.

The state Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Nnamdi Omoni, a superintendent of police (SP), has confirmed the kidnap of Kingoli to journalists in Port Harcourt.

Omoni said the command has intensified efforts to secure unconditional release of the chairman and arrest perpetrators.

He stated: "There is no contact yet from the kidnappers. But, we are out to ensure that the man is released timely and unhurt. The Commissioner of Police, Friday Eboka, has directed all the tactical commanders to move in, immediately, to ensure his release."

Meanwhile, suspected cultists have shot dead two persons and wounded, at least, three others in a supremacy battle in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

The incidents occurred at two different locations, around Victoria and Bende streets, and Lagos bus stop, all situated in the town axis of Port Harcourt.

Daily Sun gathered that the incident occurred at about 9pm, on Wednesday, close to a popular bar located in Bende street.

An eyewitness residing in Bende street, told the reporter that there was a sporadic shooting that night, forcing football fans at a viewing centre and the bar to scamper for safety.

The source, who craved not to be mentioned, said two persons sustained bullet wounds on hand and leg.

She said two persons were reportedly gunned down at the ever-busy Lagos bus axis by an unknown cult group.

"The shooting last night (Wednesday), caused panic to people living in this area. It wasn't exactly at the bar (name withheld). It was between there and Victoria street, where we were hearing the gunshots.

"I saw when some boys were carrying one person the gunmen shot at the hand. Another person was shot on his leg. One of my girls told me that she saw two dead bodies at the Lagos bus stop that night when she was returning. But, we don't know exactly which group carried out that operation. We know these bad boys hanging around Victoria street must be aware," she said.

Meanwhile, the state Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Nnamdi Omoni, has confirmed the shooting, but said there was no casualty.