

3 killed in Rivers cult war, 3 arrested

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From **Tony John**, Port Harcourt

Three persons have reportedly lost their lives as fresh cult war broke out between two rival groups in Onne community, in Eleme Local Government Area of Rivers State.

Daily Sun gathered that latest attack which occurred on Saturday with one death, was a reprisal of two killings on Friday between the two unidentified cult groups.

Community sources disclosed that among the deceased was a cultist known as ‘Small Lighter,’ who had allegedly been unleashing terror on the area.

The cult war, it was gathered, had threatened the peace of the community, forcing residents to flee their homes fearing escalation of attacks.

River State Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), SP Grace Iringe-Koko, confirmed the death of three persons and arrest of three suspects.

The PPRO 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 has been terrorising the Eleme axis, killed one person from the other cult group.

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"So, in retaliation, they went after him and killed him. One other person was killed earlier; so, three people were killed".

She added that the police Command has deployed its tactical operatives to forestall escalation of killings.

She said: "Our men (police) have been deployed to the area, and calm has been restored. Investigation is ongoing to apprehend other fleeing suspects and ensure they are prosecuted."

Meanwhile, Chairman of Eleme LGA, Brian Gokpa, has pledged to support security operatives in apprehending and prosecuting those responsible for the killings.

Gokpa urged Onne youths to remain calm and maintain peace in their areas, assuring that security operatives have contained the situation.

He commended the state police command and other security agencies for their swift response to the cult clash and professionalism in handling this crisis.

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 remain calm. Nobody should take the law into their own hands as security agencies are on top of the situation.”