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Sunlight of Islam

Pipelines vandals clash in Calabar, 2 feared dead From BONIFACE NZAMA, Calabar Tuesday, December 14, 2010

Two persons are feared dead along the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) Right of Way in Calabar, as rival groups of pipelines vandals operating in the Cross River State capital, engaged themselves in a bloody fight. Daily Sun gathered that the deceased were killed at the Ekorinim axis of the pipelines that ran from the Calabar jetty to the NNPC depot at Harbour village in the Calabar Municipal Area.

As at press time, identities of the deceased were not yet ascertained but friends and neighbours who were seen lamenting at the Ekorinim village simply identified their names as Mr. Ekeng and Mr. Kingsley, aka King. According to information gathered, trouble started between Creek Town boys from Odukpani Local Government Area of the state and the Ekorinim urchins in Calabar Municipality over the sharing of their booties.

The hoodlums, who reportedly stormed the pipelines at about 1am, were said to be over 20 in number, armed with locally made guns, machetes and jerry cans as they took their turns to scoop oil from the pipelines.

The hoodlums were said to have already emptied the pipelines, preparing to

return to their homes with their loot when the Creek Town boys allegedly attempted to cart away the entire jerry cans of fuel, leaving their Ekorinim counterparts high and dry.

What culminated in loss of lives reportedly started as the Creek Town boys started loading the jerry cans of fuel into their canoes for ferrying across the Calabar River to the Odukpani area when Mr. Kingsley angry, demanding for his share of the loot.

In lieu of fuel, it was gathered that the Ekorinim boys demanded N10,000 as compensation but Creek Town boys refused to make any concession.

The Creek Town boys who were said to be more in number, allegedly overwhelmed Kingsley and dragged him from the pipeline area at the Calabar creeks to the riverside where he was allegedly battered to death and thrown into the river.

As Ekeng waited at the pipelines for some minutes for Kingsley to return to no avail, it was gathered that he (Ekeng) decided to follow the captors to the riverbank to ascertain the fate of his friend, when the deadly Creek Town boys reportedly swooped on him.

According to information gathered, the Creek Town boys suspected Ekeng might report them to security agents and decided to drown him.

One Mr. Ekong Edet, who identified himself as a friend to the late Mr. Kingsley, confirmed that the deceased left the house hale and hearty on the fateful night to scoop fuel only for them to be informed that he had been killed at the pipelines.

In his words: "I advised him not to involve himself in fuel bunkering because petroleum pipelines have killed so many people but he did not listen."

As at press time, no arrest had been made even as the deceased were said to have been buried in shallow graves at the riverside.

Efforts by our correspondent to speak with the Police Public Relations Officer in charge of the state Police Command, Mr. Etim Dickson, did not yield any result as he persistently ignored his calls, claiming he was holding security meeting with the state commissioner of police.

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