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Fresh cultists' attack claims two lives in Rivers

Suspected cultists targeting rivals have killed two residents of Agbonchia Community in Eleme Local Government Area of Rivers State, heightening tension in the community which is a short distance to the Port Harcourt Refinery.

An eyewitness said that the cultists operating on motorbikes, stormed the community on Monday night and attacked some buildings they believed were being occupied by rival cultists.

He also said that some residents sustained injuries and that were being treated in a hospital.

Two major cult groups in the local government, Degbam and Dewell, have for many years engaged in a battle of supremacy, de-

spite efforts by some leaders in the area to reconcile them for peace to reign.

Among the victims of yesterday's attack was a middle aged man and father of six, whose wife sustained a gunshot injury when the hoodlums attacked the husband.

The eyewitness said that none of the perpetrators of the attack was apprehended and that efforts by the community's youths to trace them were unfruitful after the attack.

The Chairman of Eleme Local Government Area, Philip Oparaji, has imposed a dawn to dusk curfew in the area.

In a statement signed by his Chief Press Secretary, Nwafor Oji, the council boss also restricted the activities of commercial motorcycle

operators from 6am and 6pm, noting that criminals use motorcycles to commit crime in the area.

Meanwhile, President Muhammadu Buhari has ordered law enforcement agencies to increase action in bringing an end to the activities of cultist groups in Rivers State.

The President also condemned the spate of killings in Kaduna State.

Senior Special Assistant on Media and Publicity to the President, Garba Shehu,

in a statement yesterday, said in response to reports of the resurgence of cultism leading to loss of lives in Rivers State, Buhari called on law enforcement agencies to intensify their efforts to end the menace before it further escalates.

The President urged quick and effective intervention by community and civic leaders in support of law enforcement efforts, in all such areas bedeviled by cultist attacks and inter-communal violence.

In the Kaduna crisis, President condemned the recent violence in Kaduna State, which led to the death of 20 members of the Adara community. These unfortunate deaths are the latest incident between the Adara and Fulani peoples in the state, who have a long history of mistrust between themselves.

He appealed for peace and decried the on-going culture of 'an eye for an eye' that has fuelled a number of attacks and reprisal attacks,

with the two communities at different times, suffering casualties in Kajuru and Kachia local governments in Kaduna States.

The President also appealed to indigenes of Kaduna and other Nigerians to refrain from comments in the traditional and social media, especially by people who have little knowledge of the history of the long-standing conflict. Such comments, he says can fuel further conflict in the area and between the two groups.



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