

Supremacy battle over control of illegal oil bunkering leaves 2 dead in Rivers

April 19, 2023 Emmanuel Masha Comment(0)

Two persons have so far lost their lives following a supremacy battle between two factional cult groups at Elechi Beach axis of Mile 1 Diobu, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, which has thrown the area into confusion as the field soldiers of the two cult groups engaged in a shootout. Informed sources claim that the crisis started after disagreement over who controls the booming illegal oil bunkering activities in the area, despite a clampdown by the state government and security operatives.

To fight against soot and the open cooking or refining of stolen crude oil by gangs of oil thieves, the Rivers State government had embarked on a clampdown on illegal oil bunkerers, arresting some perpetrators and seizing their equipment. A source said that one of the factions of Deygbam wants to be in charge of the taxes imposed on the perpetrators of illegal oil bunkering activities popularly known as kpofire in local parlance. The source claimed that two persons have lost their lives since the crisis erupted last Saturday, noting that despite the moves by the leaders of the factions to give peace a chance, their foot soldiers have insisted on continuing with the “war”. The crisis has paralysed socio-economic activities in the area as residents remain indoors and business owners refusing to open their shops for fear of falling victim to indiscriminate shooting.

The spokesperson for the Rivers State Police command, SP Grace Iringe-Koko who confirmed the clash between the factions of Deygbam cult groups, said it was a supremacy battle. She also disclosed that two police patrol vans had been deployed to the area on the order of the state Commissioner of Police, Effiong Okon.