

Three Feared Dead in Ogoni Cult Clash

No fewer than three people were feared dead, several others injured and many unaccounted for yesterday in an inter-cult clash in Bodo area of Ogoniland, Gokana Local Government area of Rivers State.

Trouble was alleged to have started when a group was said to have stormed the area and abducted three people and shot

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sporadically into the air to scare away people, a situation that made people in the town to keep indoors for the past 24 hours.

The clash which was said to have been in response to the other cult group came at about 2am and raged till yesterday

evening when the Police Public Relations Officer, Mrs. Ireju Barasua said their men have moved into the area to restore peace.

A source said the two cult groups were based in the community but could not disclose their point of disagreement, adding that the community which harbours several secondary

schools were jolted from sleep with sporadic shootings coming from two ends of the community.

Another source who spoke on condition of anonymity said the two groups were fighting for supremacy by two politicians from the area who are patrons of the different groups. The duo have been alleged to be embroiled in power tussle for sometime but it became fiercer with the approach of 2007.

Said the source, "It is a battle for supremacy ahead 2007 elections. The older gang group in Bodo had long perceived another emerging group as a force that might alter the power balance, hence their decision to settle it the hard way by fighting through out the night. It is a struggle for control of not only Bodo but the entire Gokana".

US Visa: No Discrimination Against Qualified Nigerians

United States Embassy in Nigeria yesterday shed more light on factors that determine issuance of visa to Nigerians, explaining that it does not discriminate on the status of Nigerian citizens seeking to travel to America.

The embassy also dismissed perceptions that some applicants

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criminate against any sect, race, gender and ethnicity before issuing visas to qualified applicants from Nigeria.

He said: "It is the function of US mission in Nigeria to issue

visas to visiting travellers. We do not allow cultural, racial and ethnic differences to enter into the process, but strictly rely on law and procedure.

"We consider employment status, family relationship, economic and financial background of each applicants before visas are issued.