

# 8 Killed, 2 Expatriates Kidnapped in P/Harcourt

**I**t was a black Friday in Rivers State yesterday as no fewer than eight persons were killed in three separate incidents.

In the first case involving a communal clash in Bodo, seven people were feared dead. A Lebanese expatriate was also feared killed while two Italians were kidnapped in Ogoniland.

The Lebanese killed was said to be working for AUC construction company and were on their way to a road construction site they were handling when five men trailed them and opened fire killing one of them instantly and wounding the other whose names are still unknown. The incidences are coming on the heels of assurances handed out by a group of Niger Delta youths working with the Chief of Army Staff, Lieutenant General Owoye Azazi under the aegis of Niger Delta Peace Forum asking all expatriates who wanted to leave the region to stay back.

They assured them of protection as there was a cordinated effort to ensure that restiveness of youths were stopped and their safety assured since the federal government has started addressing their grievances. In the kidnap of the Italians, Pasari Lusio and Morio Lusio who were working for Revigo Construction at Kpean in Ogoniland, information has it that the duo were at Kpean when they were suddenly surrounded and taken away to an unknown destination. So far, no group has

*From Ahamefula Ogbu  
in Port Harcourt*

taken responsibility for the killing of the Lebanese and wounding the other or the kidnap of the Italians in what looks like an upswing of militancy in the Niger Delta.

In another incident, a communal cash between Bodo and Moho in Ogoniland turned fatal when no fewer than seven people were feared killed while as at the time of filing this report, guns were still booming with increased chances of more casualties.

Contacted, the Commissioner of Police in the State, Mr. Felix Ogbau confirmed the killing of the Lebanese and wounding another at Isikopo in Ikwerre Local Government Area of the State.

Also, the State Police Public Relations Officer, Mrs. Ireju Barasua confirmed the kidnap of the Italians.

Addressing newsmen yesterday, coordinator of the Peace Forum, Mr. Moses Siloko Siasia said they acknowledged the gross neglect and environmental degra-

dation which oil and gas exploration has caused in the region but insisted that genuine agitators for their cause have been hijacked by criminals.

On how he intends to carry out an all encompassing address of the problem, he stated that they have formed committees which were in charge of different arms of their programmes and assured that they were on ground to achieve peace.

According to him, oil and gas required certain expertise for which the expatriates were needed and pointed out that creatijvsrging jobs for the boys and addressing developmental problems would adequately attend to the problems of the region.

"We are tired of militancy and fighting. We want peace to reign in the region so that development can be achieved especially as the government has commenced addressing the problems. As the leaders of the youths and future leaders, we have decided to pursue peace because of the involvement of Azazi in this project.

"Government has promised that things would be done for peace to

return to the Niger Delta. Expatriates should come back to Niger Delta and work because peace has returned", he said.

When Siasia was reminded of the killings and increased criminality in te region, he said that it was because of the bad people who hijacked the cause and regretted that the struggle has been criminalised, adding also that people from outside of the Niger Delta perpetrate the crimes which were blamed on militants.

In a related case, the trial of two alleged hostage takers efore Justice Ibrahim Buba at the Federal High Court has been transferred to Enugu for security reasons. The transfer was sequel to an application moved by Mr. N. Wokoma, the prosecutor where he prayed the court to transfer the case so that his witnesses can feel free to attend the trial to give evidence.

After listening to Nwoko, the trial judge who had taken a witness in the matter agreed with him an subsequently made the order to transfer the matter to the judiciary in Enugu State.

## Yar'Adua Denies Attack in Jos

*From Oke Epia in Abuja*

time was the presidential candidate's convoy attacked throughout the two-day campaign in the state. As it is his practice since he launched his campaign in Lagos in January

past would be put behind by everyone.

"The theme of Governor Yar'Adua's consultations was the need for peaceful coexistence, based on equity and social justice for all persons,