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## Communal Crisis, Generator Fumes Claim 10 Lives

From Segun James in Yenagoa and Augustine Osayande in Jalingo, 11.05.2008

Seven people were feared killed in a communal crisis between the Fulani and Bandana people at Bandawa village in Karim-Lamido Local Government Area of Taraba State.

In a similar incident, a prophet with the Brotherhood of the Cross and Star (Olumba Olumba Obu) and his three wives were on Monday night suffocated to death by fumes from the family's generating set at their home in Etegwe, Yenagoa.

The prophet, Adani Okeke and his wives, one of whom was identified as Mary Abinnamu, were said to have retired to bed early in the night. Confirming the report to newsmen in Jalingo yesterday, the state commissioner of police, Aliyu Musa, said unauthenticated report from the area alleged that seven people were killed in the communal crisis which started last Saturday.

He explained that only two dead bodies have been recovered and search parties are now in the area to see if more dead bodies would be recovered. He said the crisis started after a Bandawa who went to farm was later found dead with his head and hand caught off.

He said few members of his tribe who suspected that he was killed by nomadic fulani went into the bush for a reprisal attack against the Fulani. The police commissioner stated that the state government quickly responded to the crisis by inviting the two tribes for a meeting. He said relatives of the victims and the village head have also been detained for further interrogation.

At about midnight in Bayelsa, there was a power outage, a situation which forced the prophet to put on his generator. But in order to protect the generating set from being stolen, he was said to have brought it inside the house, placing it at the kitchen before going in for the night.

THISDAY gathered that neighbours were attracted to the scene when they noticed that nobody came out even after persistent knocking on the door to alert the family that public power supply had been restored went unanswered.

A peep through the window revealed the horror of the death of the family. The police were immediately alerted, when the door was broken in order to get access to the apartment, it was too late as all four were pronounced dead on arrival by doctors at the Federal Medical Centre, Yenagoa, where the remains have been deposited. Until his death, Prophet Okeke was the head of the Etegwe Bethel of the Brotherhood of the Cross and Star, also known as 'OOO'.

Contacted, Spokesman of the State Police Command, DSP Iniobong Ibokkete, confirmed the death of the four persons, saying, "Yes, they were choked after inhaling smoke from a generator."

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