

# Ijaw Youths Seek End to Cult Killing in Bayelsa

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Emmanuel Addeh in Yenagoa

Ijaw youths have called for calm following Saturday's clashes involving two sister communities in Ogbia, Bayelsa State.

During the violent confrontation between Otuasega and Oruma, at least one person was shot dead while others who sustained injuries were reportedly battling for their lives at some undisclosed hospitals in the state.

However, as at Saturday afternoon, a horde of security personnel had been deployed in the area by the state police commissioner, Uche Anozia, who was also said to have met with the warring groups.

The crisis, according to a community source, started as a supremacy battle between the different cult groups in the area before it degenerated into the use of dangerous weapons.

While many reportedly fled the two communities, Anozia, held a meeting with stakeholders from both communities, ostensibly to prevent further escalation of the crisis.

In a reaction, the leadership of Ijaw Youth Council (IYC) called on relevant authorities to, as a matter of urgency, wade into the crisis.

The youth organisation said that it feared that the altercation was gradually drifting to an inter-communal war between Oruma (Yibama) and Otuasega communities. A statement signed by the Information Officer, Central Zone, Kochman Kurobo, said that the chairman, Kennedy Olorogun, was saddened by the latest happening.

“We have information that a young man named Mr. Iyo John from Oruma has been shot dead in the conflict while some have sustained bullet and machete injuries.

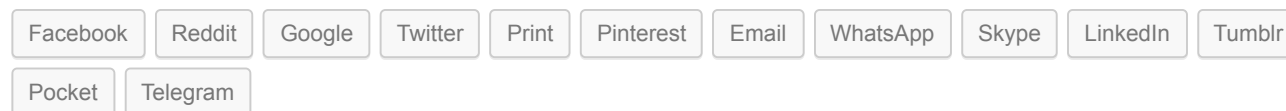
“ One Mr Goodnews Soko is currently in a coma in the hospital. Both communities have made it a priority to defend their territories from further attacks” the chairman said.

The statement added: “The zonal chairman of council strongly condemns all cults and their related activities in Bayelsa State, mostly the one that led to this crisis.

“ He urges security agents to investigate the remote and other causes of the conflicts to ensure perpetrators are brought to book”.

The IYC also called on traditional rulers and leaderships at all levels in both communities to calm aggrieved parties and halt further bloodbath, stressing that Oruma and Otuasega are two brother communities that have experienced relative peace over the decades.

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