

## 3 more killed as Offa-Erinle battle rages

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DESPITE the heavy presence of anti-riot policemen, fighting between the people of Offa and Erinle in Kwara State over land entered the fifth day yesterday, with three more people killed between Friday night and yesterday morning.

Consequently, the state police

command in a statement yesterday announced a 6 am to 6 pm curfew on the two warring communities, "until further notice as a fresh measure to restore public peace and order in the areas".

The police nevertheless assured "all peace loving persons of their safety on the federal road linking Offa and Erinle as the road has been cleared for unimpeded

traffic and lawful movements".

*Sunday Vanguard* gathered that the latest killings took place far away from the prying eyes of the police.

Nobody could confirm at the press time whether the victims were natives of Offa or Erinle but the police public relations officer in the state, DSP, Markus Gideon, who confirmed the incident, said himself and the

state commissioner of police who were in Offa yesterday saw the remains of the victims.

"The CP is still in Offa as I am talking to you, I only came to Ilorin for another official assignment, we actually saw the remains of the killed persons, we were told it happened between yesterday night and this morning" Gideon said.

According to a police press release signed by Gideon, the curfew in the warring communities, which shall be effective between 6.00 am and 6.00pm until further notice, is part of fresh measures to restore public peace and order in the areas.

The police also ordered "all persons to steer clear of the area officially designed as a "buffer-zone" between the two towns". "Similarly, all public rallies and processions are hereby banned forthwith," added the statement.

In a related development, Kwara State government has called for calm, restraint and understanding from the two warring communities.

# a little Dakar s weekend.

beaches for some serious relaxation.

and surfing and shopping.

According to a statement issued by the governor's special adviser on media and communications, Alh Nurudeen Imam- Abqunneem, "the two traditional rulers of Offa and Erinle should continue to appeal to their subjects to be peaceful and law abiding" while the two local government chairmen as security officers of the areas should cooperate with the security agents to realize immediate return to normalcy, and failure to do this, government will not hesitate to invoke relevant sections of the law to deal with the situation"

Meanwhile irate youths in Offa vandalized the official car of the chief of staff to the state governor, Alh. Abdulganiyu Cook Olododo, who led government entourage to visit the areas, while the Nissan lift-back car of *The Comet* Correspondent, Mr Biodun Oyeleye, was also vandalized and the recording camera of *Channels Television* and the photo camera of *Tribune* photojournalist seized

Also at the Erinle Secondary School, the ongoing secondary school entrance examination could not hold there because of the proximity to the battle field, while travellers going to Osun State enroute Okuku could not drive through the usual Offa/Erinle main road because of fear of being hit by stray bullets.

Youths were mostly seen carrying sophisticated weapons and charms around while informed sources confided in *Sunday Vanguard* that the two communities hired experienced mercenaries from Oyo and Osun states to help in prosecuting the war.

The police appeared helpless as they watched the warring youths and could not effect any arrest for fear of being labelled as taking side in the crisis.