

Two policemen killed in C-River over communal crisis

By George Onah

PORT HARCOURT — TWO mobile policemen have been shot dead at Nsadop, Boki Local Government, Cross River State following a disagreement over the sharing formula and distribution of the palm oil estate in the area between the youths and peasants farmers, on one hand and the leadership of the community, including the political class on the other.

Vanguard gathered that before now, the palm estate was a source of legitimate livelihood and wealth for the youths and peasants farmers. But the political class in the area suddenly wrestled the estate from the former cultivators and shared it, not only among themselves but party faithfuls in other neighbouring local governments.

It was learnt that a protest, last week from the non-politicians did not yield fruit, even as it was suggested to the Nsadop leadership to emulate the neighbouring Borum community,

where the palm oil settlement is divided among the youths and peasants to the effect that each capable adult is allotted about 600 palm trees for harvesting and an annual N10,000 revenue is paid to government coffers.

The disagreement between the town's folks and the politicians rose to a crescendo and sensing a breakdown of law and order the leadership of the community invited the police to keep the peace.

However, grumbling amongst the youths persisted and things got to a head when it was alleged that a confrontation ensued between the youths and police leading to the shooting of one of the town's folks.

In an apparent retaliatory move, the youths regrouped, confronted the small detachment of policemen there and allegedly shot two of the security men to death.

Conscious of the implication of the youths' action, the town's folks fled. But the police sent for reinforcement and scores of people were picked up for interrogation over the incident.