

65-year-old killed in renewed hostilities between cult groups

BY SAMUEL OYA-DONGHA

YENAGOA—FEAR, Sunday night, gripped residents of Yenagoa, the Bayelsa State capital, following the resurgence of hostilities between suspected rival cult groups, which claimed the life of a 65-year-old ex-soldier identified as Mr. Billy.

The deceased was reportedly hit by stray bullets around the Ovom suburb of the capital city where the cultists were locked in gun duel. Attempt by sympathizers to save the life of the man proved abortive due to excessive bleeding from injuries sustained.

The deceased who hailed from Okunbiri, in Sagbama Local Government Area of the state, according to witnesses, was rushed to Federal Medical Centre (FMC), in Yenagoa around 8.30pm where he gave up the ghost.

His corpse had since been deposited at the morgue of the FMC, just as another man in his early 30s who was reportedly hit by the cultists' stray bullets is said to be receiving treatment at an undisclosed hospital in the state capital.

Trouble ensued Sunday evening around 8.00pm when two cult gangs engaged themselves in a violent shootout over an age-long dispute,

along Bishop Dimieri Grammar School, Yenagoa.

Residents were said to have scampered for safety as sound of gunshots rent

the air, forcing shop owners to hurriedly close to avoid being hit by stray bullets.

Contacted, the state Police Public Relation

Officer, PPRO, ASP Eguaveon Emopkae, said he was yet to be briefed on the incident.

FG orders re-opening of Bebi Strip

BY KENNETH EHIGIATOR

THE Federal Government has ordered the re-opening of Bebi Strip, Obudu, Cross Rivers State, some four years after it was shut down, in the aftermath of the crash of Beechcraft 1900 D plane.

The aircraft was on its way to the strip when it crashed not too far away, killing all three crew members.

Aviation Minister, Princess Stella Oduah, who gave the order after inspecting facilities at the strip yesterday, expressed satisfaction with its readiness for light aircraft operations.

The minister, who was accompanied by the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Aviation, Ms. Anne Ene-Ita, and Director-General of Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority, NCAA, and other parastatal chiefs, said the air strip had all necessary equipment for safe flight operations.

Special Assistant to the

minister, Mr. Joe Obi, said in a statement yesterday:

"The Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority, NCAA, has ordered the reopening of the Bebi Airstrip, Obudu in Cross River State.

"The reopening follows the inspection of the airstrip yesterday by the Aviation Minister, Princess Stella Adaeze Oduah, to ascertain the state of readiness of the facility for light aircraft operations.

"The Minister, who was accompanied on the inspection tour by the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry, Ms Anne Ene-Ita, the Director-General of NCAA, Dr. Harold Demuren, and other parastatal heads, expressed satisfaction with the state of equipment at the airstrip.

"With the DVOR in place, runway lights, adequate fire cover and radio equipment, the facility has been notamed open by the NCAA."

