

News

Communal clash: Three feared dead in Rivers

...as residents flee Buguma Town

BY JIMITOTA ONOYUME

PORT HARCOURT—THREE persons are feared dead in Buguma, Asari Toru Local Government Area of Rivers State, after a clash between two groups.

Vanguard gathered that most residents have fled the community for fear of their lives.

Trouble, it was gathered, started in the area, weekend, when a group identified as Kegema Unity Forum went for the funeral of a member's father. During the funeral, another group, identified as White Chesea allegedly stormed the venue, harassing members of Kegema Unity Forum.

The situation allegedly got out of hand, leading to a free for all. The fight, which continued till Monday, reportedly left one Princewill dead while two other youths are allegedly still missing.

Community sources, who did not want their names in print, said that after the first clash at the venue of the funeral, one of the groups allegedly mobilised its members to attack members of the other group at their homes.

Continuing, the sources said that there was tension in the community on Sunday, when one of the groups reportedly exploded about seven dynamites in the community, an action that further heightened the already tensed situation in the area.

A former militant leader in

the community, Mr. Sobomabo Jackreece, aka *Egberipapa*, who spoke to *Vanguard* on phone on the development in Buguma community, lamented the situation. He said that he was in Abuja since last week Friday, when the crisis started.

He fingered a top politician in the area as being behind the fight, adding that security operatives had also not

been alive to their responsibility in the face of the crisis because of the alleged involvement of the politician.

He said that as a Peace Ambassador, he had often appealed to youths in the area to remain calm and shun violence.

He said: "I have been in Abuja all this while. It is really sad to hear of the ugly stories from my community. I

was told that the politician (name withheld), is responsible for the crisis. He wants to force everybody in the local government area to be in his camp. He sent thugs to harass innocent people at a funeral. The security men, I have also been told, have been partial in the handling of the crisis."

The Police could not be reached for comment.



POWER AFRICA OFF-GRID: From left: United States Africa Development Foundation Economic Adviser, Douglas Climan; Chief Executive of General Electric (GE), Dr. Lazarus Angbazo and Communication Manager, Mr. Osagie Ogunbor, addressing journalists during call for entries for the Power Africa Off-Grid Energy Challenge, in Abuja, yesterday. Photo: Gbemig Olamikan.