

One dead, scores injured as Bayelsa community youths clash over election

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...Sylva calls for peace

By Samuel Oyadongha

YENAGOA—ONE person was yesterday reported dead while several others sustained injuries following a clash among youths of Okpoama community in Brass Local Government Area of Bayelsa State.



The deceased, aged 26 and simply identified as Ayebatonye Jnr was reportedly shot around the neck region.

He was said to have died at the Nigerian Delta University Teaching Hospital, Okolobiri, where he was rushed to doctors, who battled to save his life.

The coastal settlement on the Atlantic fringe of the Bayelsa East senatorial district was rocked by violence on Sunday night when two factions loyal to some members of the All Progressive Congress, APC and All Progressive Grand Alliance, APGA, clashed.

Sources told Vanguard that a faction of the youth body, which arrived the community about 8p.m., on Sunday night, were shot on arriving the waterside and they reportedly returned fire.

It was further learned that the exchange of gunfire between the warring factions led to confusion in the community.

Meanwhile, former governor and leader of APC in Bayelsa State, Chief Timipre Sylvia has condemned the Sunday night violence that rocked his Okpoama home town in Brass council at which a youth was killed and several others injured.

Sylva in a statement by his Media Adviser, Doifie Buokoribo described the incident as most unfortunate.

He said, "In the unfortunate incident that occurred on Sunday over the election of youth executives in the kingdom, lawless elements procured by an interested party shot and maimed some youths. As at press time, one youth leader who sustained serious injuries had died.

"Sylva deplores the violence, describing it as unwarranted, unfortunate and strange to the hitherto peaceful community."

Also, the member representing Brass constituency II in the state House of Assembly, Mr Belemote Watson has condemned the shooting and maiming of peaceful youths of Okpoama Kingdom by suspected thugs and mercenaries, all in the name of youth election.

He called on the king, the kingdom council of chiefs, security agencies, the kingdom youth leadership and the Action Committee of Okpoama to do the needful by fishing out the perpetrators for disciplinary action.

Watson said "The peace of Okpoama Kingdom is sacrosanct and we cannot afford to live in fear in our communities. We cannot be taken hostage by suspected thugs and mercenaries."

In his reaction, the Caretaker Chairman of the Brass council, Mr Victor Isiah has ordered the immediate suspension of the youth executive election in the area.

Contacted, the spokesman of the state Police Command, Mr. Asimin Butswat, confirmed the incident, adding that he was in consultation with the newly deployed Commissioner of Police over the development.

