

5 dead, 11 houses razed as youths clash in C-River

By Emma Una

CALABAR— FIVE persons have been feared dead and about 11 houses razed following a violent clash by youths in Mfom Two community in Ogoja Local Government Area of Cross River State.

The clash erupted following disagreement over the ownership and collection of tolls on the several illegal road blocks they created along the Ogoja-Abakaliki highway to extort money from motorists.

When Vanguard visited the scene, yesterday, the razed houses and destroyed household property were seen all over the community while the youths were said to have fled into the bush and neighbouring communities to avoid arrest.

The village head, Chief Ogar Michael, said the fight started with two of the youths who had a disagreement over who was to take the proceeds of one of the road blocks mounted in the community, which degenerated into a physical combat with the use of machetes.

He said: "Two of them ignored efforts to stop them from fighting and proceeded to use weapons on each other. Both died on the spot. This made their friends to join in the fight, resulting in several injuries. Two of the youths died on the way to the Lutheran Hospital at Yahe that same day while another died last night."

According to him, the milieu led to the burning of houses and destruction of property belonging to parents of those on the opposing side in the fight. Eventually, over 11

houses were razed.

He said: "One gang burnt the houses of the other gang members and even some of those who were supposed to be making peace joined in the fight and destruction leaving many of us surprised at what came over them"

Chief Ogar said the bodies

of those who died had been deposited in the mortuaries in Yahe and Ogoja while those who took part in the conflict had since gone into hiding.

The Ogoja Local Government Chairman, Mr Emmanuel Ishabor, said he was not ready to speak on the matter while the Cross River

State Police Command spokesman, Irene Ugbo, said she had not been briefed.

Vanguard, however, noticed the presence of anti-riot policemen and soldiers mounting checkpoints all over the community to ensure peace returns to the area.



It was gathered that the hoodlums, who appeared surprised upon seeing the policemen controlling traffic at the bus stop close to their burnt station, moved to challenge them, threatening to attack them for daring to return to the road.

Consequently, five of them

The suspects.

whose identities were given as Kelvin Johnson, Aderoju Theophilus, Adeleke Bankole, Adebayo Raimi, and Lateef

Abdul Malik were arrested. According to an eye witness who identified himself as Mr Longinus Ezeji, "I appreciate the rapid response and