

8 killed, 18 injured as cult clash escalates in Benue communities

By Peter Duru

MAKURDI—NO fewer than eight persons were feared killed in a bloody rival cult war that escalated into a communal fight in Onyagede, Ohimini Local Government Area of Benue State.

The bloody fight, according to a source in the area, also left 18 persons with serious bullet wounds while many have deserted their homes for fear of being killed.

According to a former Ohimini Local Government Chairman, Musa Alechenu, who confirmed the clashes, the cult fight also triggered a

communal crisis between the people of Ogoli and Ikpoke communities in Onyagede

He said: "The cult war has been going on in my place in the last six days. All efforts to reach security personnel to stem it have been unsuccessful.

"I tried to use my contact to mobilise the Divisional Police Officer in charge of Ohimini LGA. They came in and this morning they pulled out.

"Regrettably, the fight has culminated into a village war between Ogoli and Ikpoke communities in the same Ohimini LGA and the situation is not funny at all. As we speak, there are corpses on the streets. They have killed

eight persons so far and have inflicted bullet wounds on 18 persons. The fight is going on.

"I have reached the Deputy Governor, Benson Abounu, who promised to reach the Security Adviser to ensure that military personnel of *Operation Whirl Stroke* are drafted to the communities.

"I am making a passionate appeal to the security agencies to come and restore peace in the communities because the aged are dying of gunshot wounds. As of now, there is no single presence of any security personnel in the area," the former chairman said.

Efforts to reach the Police Public Relations Officer, Catherine Anene, was unsuccessful.