

7 killed in Makurdi rival cult clash



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By Peter Duru
Makurdi—A bloody cult clash between rival groups has claimed the lives of seven persons and led to the beheading of another in the North Bank area of Makurdi town.
It was gathered that the clash, which erupted on Friday at the North Bank Market, near the Nigerian Army School of Military Engineering, NASME, followed a minor disagreement between two members of the rival Red and Black cult gangs and later escalated into a bloody fight.
According to an eyewitness, who spoke on condition of anonymity, “it all started when a member of one of the cult groups came to North Bank Market, near NASME, to purchase something. Members of a rival gang saw him and harassed him, so he went back and told his friends, and they came back for a fight. That was how the whole thing started.
“And before anybody knew what was happening, they turned the market into a war zone, as traders had to close their businesses and fled.
“The fight continued till Saturday because they went hunting members of rival gang. Anyone they caught was either hacked to death or gunned down. So far, seven persons have been confirmed dead in the fight.
“Though calm has returned today (Monday) because the military, Police, DSS, NSCDC and others security operatives have moved into the area and are arresting the suspects.”
Chairman of North Bank Market, Cibilus Odinaka, who confirmed the development, said the market was closed down on Friday as a result of the crisis, lamenting the slow response by security personnel to the crisis.
He said “between that day and today, six persons have been killed. To calm the whole issue, that is a stakeholders thing. But as market leaders, we request that they should provide us security.
The Commander of Operation Shere, an anti cult group, Nura Umar, who mobilised his team to quell the crisis, informed that aside the six, one of the victims was beheaded and the severed head taken away.
He said some of the dead also had their hands severed “and there were no injuries. They outrightly killed each other. One of the corpses had the head severed and nobody knows where they took the head to. Even hands were severed.

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“From our findings, it was a fight between the Red and Black cults. The Red cult killed two, while the Black killed four. And there was a commercial motorbike rider, who was not a cult member but was killed in the cross fire.
“They also destroyed a house near a school. We learnt that one of the cult boys ran into the house when the rival gang members chased him. And for that reason, they destroyed the house because the owners allowed the boy to escape into their house. All this happened through the weekend.
Contacted, the Police Public Relations Officer, Catherine Anene who confirmed development said “cult activities in North were reported and the command deployed police officers to take charge. Investigation is ongoing. I have no report of the number of the victims.”