

NEWS

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Renewed cult war claims 8, groups urge Benin monarch's interventions



•NOCSON condemns killings

By Ozioruva Aliu

BENN CITY—A renewed cult war in some parts of Benin City, Edo State, has reportedly claimed eight lives, particularly in Upper Sokponba Road of the state capital.

Sources claim that the death toll is more than 20 in the last three days when the crisis started.

The latest clash is said to be between the suspected members of Eiye and Vikings confraternities.

Though the cause of the clash is still known, it was gathered that the fight escalated when some of the people believed to be leaders of the groups tried to resolve the crisis in a meeting called at Tipper Garage in Idogbo area of Upper Sokponba Road and that “the attempt to settle matter did not work, thereafter, some suspected Eiye members attacked the Vikings members and inflicted injuries’ on them with knives but no life was lost.

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“The Vikings came back in their numbers and killed one of the top members of Eiye and that was how the thing escalated.

“After that, they killed another person called Oilman also an Eiye member and from there, they went to two houses and killed another person. That was what led Eiye to decide to start their retaliation.

“There was a Vikings member that was stabbed and they thought he was dead but he is in the hospital. The challenge in this is that one of the groups would not accept the apology and the other would not apologise,” the source added.

Meanwhile, a group, Benin United Forum, BUF, has called on the Oba of Benin, Omo N’Oba N’Edo Uku Akpolokpolo, Ewuare II invoke curses on those involved in cult-related killings like he did when human trafficking assumed embarrassing dimension in the kingdom.

A statement by President and Secretary of the group, Iyamu Osaro Culture and Osayuki-Osa Benson, said, we “Humbly appeal to our God’s king, Omo N’ Oba N’ Edo, Uku Akpolo Kpolo Oba Ewuare II, to direct our Ohens (Chief Priests) across the length and breadth of Benin Kingdom to immediately place curse(s) on those who are hiding under cultism to kill themselves in some part of Benin City, which has consumed the lives of countless youths, especially at Upper Sakponba Axis, which is often seen as the centre ground for the barbaric act, followed by Egor/Uwelu, Ugbowo/Uselu, part of GRA.”

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Another group, the Network of Civil Society Organisations, NOCSON, has called on the police to lift the ban on vigilante groups in the state which it said has led to a rise in crime in the state, including the ongoing cult killings.

A statement by the president of the organisation, Ogbidi Emmanuel said the cult clash was largely blamed on the porous nature of security in the state, following the “needless ban on the Edo State Joint Security Network earlier trained by the Police.

“The ban, which was pronounced by the Inspector General of Police, Mr. Kayode Egbetokun has since brought about a great increase in crime to an alarming rate, especially within the locals.”

The group called on the police to investigate the cult-related killings and bring perpetrators to book. When contacted, the Police Public Relations Officer, Moses Yamu said the police would respond at the appropriate time to the killings.