

19 feared killed, residents flee Rivers community as rival cultists clash



By Davies Iheamnachor

PORT HARCOURT— No fewer than 19 persons were feared killed, yesterday, after cultists clashed in Obelle Community, Emohua Local Government Area of Rivers State, forcing residents to flee the troubled community for safety.

This came after a similar clash last Wednesday that left seven people dead in the community.

The community was still lamenting the last Wednesday mayhem when two rival cult groups in the area resumed their battle for supremacy after more than two years of hibernation.

The latest clash was reportedly between the Deybam and Icelanders cult groups. Sources revealed that, after the killings on Wednesday, the group whose members were slain invaded Obelle yesterday, targeting the relatives of those they believed were responsible for the deaths.

While the cultists continued their attack, the opposing cult group engaged them in a fierce gun battle.

A source in the area identified as Kingsley alleged that the group that lost members on Wednesday had been operating in the area when the rival group arrived, saying:

“On Sunday, cultists clashed in our community.

Many people have been killed, including innocent ones. The shooting was so intense that people began fleeing the area. About 19 persons have been killed.

“On Sunday morning, some cultists came out and started shooting. They were attacking the relatives of the people they claimed were members of the gang that killed their own. It didn’t take long before the rival group appeared and started shooting. Members of both groups were killed in the crossfire.

“We are calling on the government to come to our aid. These cults are trying to tear our community apart. We want the police and the army to help us.

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The Police Public Relations Officer, PPRO, state Police Command, Grace Iringe-Koko, confirmed the report, but said she was waiting for the details at the time of this report.