

C/River: Two killed in Ugep/ Idomi renewed communal clash



...Chairman issues 72hrs Ultimatum to Chiefs to produce masterminds

...Police deploys VCRU to calm situation....PPRO

By Ike Uchechukwu, CALABAR

Tears and anger shadowed Ekpenti Farm Road yesterday after gunmen shot dead two middle-aged farmers a father and a neighbour, reigniting a long-standing communal feud between Ugep and Idomi communities in Yakurr Local Government Area of Cross River State.

One of the victims, 56-year-old Omini Iyam Ebri, was allegedly shot to death while working on his farm along Ekpenti Farm Road, off Idomi–Ugep Road, at about 7am on Monday.

The second victim, 58-year-old Ubi Ofem Ubi, who was with Ebri at the time of the attack, sustained a gunshot injury to his left leg and was taken to General Hospital, Ugep, but passed away while in the hospital.

The incident has heightened tension between the affected communities, with indications of emerging communal unrest.

Confirming the incident, ASP Sunday Eitokpah, Police Public Relations Officer, Cross River State Command, said the deceased bodies have been deposited in the morgue.

He also disclosed that operatives, in collaboration with Violent Crime Response Unit (VCRU) personnel, have been deployed to the area to maintain peace.

“At about 1020hrs, one Charles Omini Iyam (M), 28 years, reported the killing of his father, Omini Iyam Ebri (M), 56 years, who was allegedly shot in the face while working on his farm along Ekpenti Farm Road, off Idomi–Ugep Road, at about 0705hrs.

“A second victim, one Ubi Ofem Ubi (M), 58 years, who was with the deceased at the time of the attack, sustained a gunshot injury to his left leg and is currently receiving treatment at General Hospital, Ugep, but passed away while in the hospital

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“The corpse of the deceased has been deposited at the hospital mortuary.

“Police operatives, in collaboration with VCRU personnel, have been deployed to the area to maintain peace, prevent further escalation, and reassure residents while efforts to identify and apprehend those responsible,” Eitokpah said.

Meanwhile, the Chairman of Yakurr Local Government Area, Hon. Yibala Inyang, has issued a 72-hour ultimatum to the traditional leadership and community heads of Ugep and Idomi to identify individuals allegedly responsible for reigniting tensions between the two communities.

In a press release , Inyang expressed concern over reports of renewed threats and activities capable of disrupting the fragile peace recently restored between the neighbouring communities.

He described the development as disappointing, noting that the local government, traditional rulers, security agencies and other stakeholders had invested significant efforts in promoting peace and reconciliation between the communities.

According to the chairman, both communities had previously participated in a peace meeting convened by the Yakurr Local Government Council, where resolutions aimed at fostering lasting peace, unity and stability were unanimously adopted.

He said one of the resolutions provided that any individual or group found circulating false, misleading or unverified information capable of inciting violence or causing unrest would be identified and sanctioned.

Another resolution stipulated that where perpetrators of any future crisis could not be identified, the traditional leadership of the affected community would be held accountable.

“In line with these resolutions and following recent developments, I hereby direct the traditional leadership and community heads of both Ugep and Idomi communities to identify and present, within 72 hours (3 days) of the issuance of this statement, the individuals responsible for actions, statements or activities reigniting hostilities between these two communities,” Inyang stated.

He warned that failure to comply with the directive would attract legal consequences, adding that the relevant community leadership would be held accountable in accordance with the resolutions reached during the peace meeting and existing laws.