

Police detain 8 monarchs for alleged killing, arson in Benue

BY GODWIN AKOR, Makurdi

EIGHT traditional rulers from Guma and Tarka local government areas of Benue State have been detained at the police headquarters on the orders of the Police Commissioner, Emmanuel Obiako.

Investigation revealed that the traditional rulers were said to have played ignoble roles in the killing, maiming and burning of houses that have taken place at the border between the two local governments.

It was learnt that the traditional rulers made up of kindred and district heads traded blames and made statements that implicated them during a meeting they held with the police commissioner.

The traditional rulers admitted during the meeting that the N150 allegedly paid to a motor cyclist for conveying a passenger caused the problem which has led to the killing of over five persons on both sides.

At the meeting that was attended by the area commanders for Gboko and Makurdi as well as the council chairmen for Tarka and Guma local governments, it became obvious that the traditional rulers were behind the crisis which started three months ago.

It was as a result of the facts that emerged from their statements that the police commissioner ordered that they should be detained at the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) pending their prosecution.

It was also gathered that the eight traditional rulers would be charged to court for conspiracy and culpable homicide.

When contacted, the Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Mr. Alaribe Ejike, confirmed the arrest and detention of the traditional

rulers and said they would be charged to court next week.

When our correspondent visited the police headquarters, prominent citizens of the two local governments were seen discussing ways of securing the release of the affected traditional rulers but the police commissioner said the era of influence and impunity by influential persons was

gone.

Our correspondent learnt that the detention would serve as a warning to those encouraging the shedding of blood at the border area between the two local governments.

Last week, Governor Gabriel Suswam directed the two council chairmen to bring an end to the lingering crisis

or face sack.

Prior to that period, the state government had set up a committee to investigate the immediate and remote causes of the crisis and recommend appropriate measures that would lead to the end of the conflict but the committee headed by a former accountant general of the state, Mr A P Idoko was yet to submit its report.



INSPECTION: Lagos State Governor Babatunde Fashola SAN (2nd right), being conducted round the Ikeja Army Cantonment Medical Centre by Architect Roseline Ijagbemi of Highest Ventures Limited (2nd left) during an inspection tour of the Centre affected by the armoury explosion of January 2002 being rehabilitated with the support of the State Government yesterday. With them is the Commander 9, Nigerian Army Ikeja, Brigadier-General, Sanusi Nasiru Muazu (left).

Engage in agriculture, Suswam advises p

BY Godwin Akor, Makurdi

AFTER about 10 years of isolation from the rest of Makurdi, the Benue State capital, Governor Gabriel Suswam has directed that a formal request for the provision of access road and electricity at Kaamem village behind Federal Low Cost Housing Estate, Naka road, be sent to his office for immediate action.

The governor who was at the village to

commission fish ponds and poultry farms belonging to the wife of the director of protocol, Mrs. Rose Kwaghzan, at the weekend, said he had directed that the road should be opened up but there was a delay.

He told members of the community that they would not be neglected in the ongoing roads rehabilitation exercise and directed the director of protocol to handle the assignment of contacting his office on the provision of access road and extension of electricity supply.

Suswam said Mrs. Kwaghzan would be

given a loan from the N1 billion agricultural fund sourced from the Federal Government and advised politicians to engage in viable agricultural projects so as to benefit from the loan scheme which needed no collateral.

He bought 35 crates of eggs and 3,000 fishes for distribution to members of the community and donated the sum of N4 million for the provision of more facilities at the fish ponds and poultry farms.

Earlier, in a welcome address, Mrs. Kwaghzan, had told the governor that the "Our Future Farms"