

# 13 killed, 111 trucks burnt as food vendor, transporter clash at BCC premises

From Toryila Kajo, Makurdi

THIRTEEN people were said to have died while one hundred and eleven trucks were burnt following a disagreement that resulted into fighting between a female food vendor and a transporter at the Benue Cement Company, at Yandev in Gboko Local Government area of Benue State.

An eye witness told our correspondent who visited the scene of the

incident traced the genesis of the fracas sometime ago when a truck driver known as Suleiman eat food from a food vendor called Miss Kwaghkure on credit with the understanding that he will pay at a later date.

According to the witness a week after Suleiman was unable to pay the debt, Miss Kwaghkure accosted him demanding for her money and it was at this appoint that Suleiman was said to have slapped

her, resulting into violence broke out between the two.

Daily Trust gathered that people supporting the two parties joined in the fight which escalated resulting to the burning of eighty nine trucks belong to Benue Cement Company while twenty two other vehicles belonging to some businessmen were also affected.

Benue State governor, Gabriel Suswam, who paid a visit to the com-

pany expressed shock at the magnitude of destruction caused to lives and property over what he described as flimsy misunderstanding between two business partners.

He said since the crisis was between two people who not even the management staff of the company, and asked the leadership of Benue Cement Company to look into it with the aim of finding a permanent solution. Suswam also urged the host com-

munity to stay away from the factory since they are not involved in the crisis.

BCC General Manager, Finance, Mr. Mike Etu who was also visited the scene of the incident, rule out tribal or religious colouration over the crisis, saying it was purely out of business interest by those involved. He lamented that although Dangote had been operating with the interest of the host community at heart, it had been under security

threat as its vehicles were often attacked and cement looted by some people.

Benue Police Command Public Relations Officer, ASP Alarie Ejike, confirmed the incident saying the police had made some arrest in connection with the matter. While advising people to always find better ways of resolving disputes, Ejike said those found culpable in the incident would be charged to court after investigation.