

# 2 killed in renewed Benue communal crisis

From Hope Abah Emmanuel

Two people have been killed in a renewed fighting between two communities in Ikpayongo, Gwer East Local Government Area of Benue State.

Daily Trust also gathered that several houses were burnt by the warring parties -Mbakume and Mbasombo people-who renewed hostilities over the weekend.

Witnesses said many inhabitants deserted the affected communities after the crisis erupted on Saturday.

"Residents scampered for safety as gunshots rent the air on Saturday night. Travellers had a difficult time passing through the Ikpayongo-Aliade highway about 7 pm and 8 pm on that day.

"I can't exactly say what triggered the fresh crisis but the trouble has lingered over the years. And as we speak, the fighting has spread to the nearby Ayati village," a witness who craved

anonymity said.

Our correspondent reports that the hostility has continued despite several interventions by the state government and security agencies.

In 2020, Governor Samuel Ortom suspended five Tiv traditional rulers for their alleged complicity in land-related disputes in their domains.

One of such crisis occurred on March 11, 2020, when the villagers clashed after disagreeing on the location where a dead person ought to be buried.

Meanwhile, the Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), DSP Catherine Anene, has confirmed to newsmen that two persons lost their lives in the fresh hostility between Mbakume and Mbasombo people.

Anene said the police had continued to have a regular roundtable peace dialogue with warring parties, wondering why they would often breach the process.