

Renewed rivalry in Benue communities sparks fear

From Hope Abah, Makurdi

A resurgence of communal conflict between the Egba and Ologba communities in Agatu Local Government Area of Benue State has heightened tension, prompting one faction to appeal for government intervention.

The longstanding feud between the Egba and Ologba communities, primarily stemming from disputes over ownership of a fish pond, has resulted in numerous casualties over the years.

However, peace efforts by international nongovernmental organizations had somewhat mitigated the conflict in recent times, culminating in joint fishing festivals.

On Sunday, the Egba community raised concerns over a potential breakdown of peace, urging the state governor, Hyacinth Alia, and other relevant authorities to intervene.

They accused their Ologba counterparts of incessant harassment,

attacks, and killings of Egba residents.

Clement Oyaje, a community leader from Egba, while addressing journalists in Makurdi yesterday, recalled a recent incident where an Egba youth, Ohili Iduh Angela, was allegedly killed by Ologba youths while returning from the market.

According to Oyaje, the situation has severely disrupted daily life for Egba residents, hindering movement, commerce and agricultural activities.

He expressed fear for the safety and well-being of his community, citing ongoing threats and a perceived lack of government intervention.

However, an elder from Ologba, who preferred not to be named, dismissed the allegations as baseless lies.

He said the Ologba people are law-abiding and would not engage in violent acts or block public roads.

Efforts to get response from the police spokeswoman in Benue, Catherine Anene, were unsuccessful as calls and messages went unanswered.