

7 killed, 6 injured as farmers, hoodlums clash in Edo

From Usman A. Bello Benin

Seven people were confirmed dead while six others sustained injuries in a clash between cocoa farmers and suspected hoodlums in Gbelemoti community in Ovia South-West LGA of Edo State.

The clash, which happened on Thursday and Friday, also left many houses burnt.

It was also gathered that trouble started on Thursday when a cocoa farmer of Ikale extraction hired some vigilantes to guard his cocoa farm which had been under serious poaching by thieves suspected to be Ijaw boys.

The vigilantes, while guarding the farm, reportedly killed four thieves who came to the farm to steal produce.

It was gathered that the crisis escalated on Friday as hoodlums suspected to be sympathetic to the victims of the Thursday clash, mobilised to the cocoa community in



■ One of the affected houses

reprisal attack.

A community source, who craved anonymity, said "An Ikale man hired a vigilante to guard his farm on account of stealing. The boys were reportedly stealing the produce when they were killed."

He added that "On Friday morning, there was a reprisal attack by those sympathetic to the incident and some people

were killed and houses burnt."

The state police command's spokesman, CSP Moses Yamu, said the team had evacuated the deceased to the morgue while six who were injured are currently receiving treatment.

He said a joint operation with the army, vigilantes and other security agencies is ongoing in the area. He said the situation has been brought under control.