

Odili wants police to remain in warring Ogoni communities

RIVERS State Governor, Peter Odili, has asked the state Commissioner of Police not to withdraw anti-riot policemen deployed in the two Ogoni warring communities of Mogho and Bodo until normalcy returns to the area.

And perturbed by the wanton destruction of lives and property in the two communities, the governor said a Judicial Commission of Inquiry would be set up to look into the remote and immediate causes of the crisis, which has claimed over 40 lives and the destruction of over 500 houses in Mogho alone.

Odili disclosed this during an unannounced visit to the two communities at the weekend.

The governor, who was accompanied by the Gokana Council Chairman, Fred Kpakol, Commissioner of Police, Mr Felix Ogbaudu, Attorney-General and Commissioner for Justice, Mr Odein Ajumogobia (SAN), Information Commissioner, Mr Magnus Abe, Finance Commissioner, Mr Kenneth Kobani, amongst other top government functionaries, bemoaned the crisis, which he described as unfortunate.

The governor said he was shocked by the callous and mindless destruction of lives and property in the communities. According to him, the resort to violence to solve communal conflicts is totally unacceptable and

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condemnable.

Allegations that indigenes of Bodo were responsible for the killing and decapitation of a 60-year widow from Mogho had triggered off a communal war between the two communities.

An enraged Odili said that anyone who found culpable by the Judicial Commission of Inquiry would face the full weight of the law to serve as deterrence to others.

He added that government would take the recommendations of the Judicial Commission of Inquiry very seriously to forestall future occurrence.

"It is unfortunate that in the face of pressing problems and government efforts at improving the quality of our people, we find no sense in this wanton destruction of lives and property because you do not build or develop by destroying. Life comes from God, no human being has any right to take life of another," the governor said.

Odili urged the Ogonis to also follow the path of dialogue, which he stressed remained the best option to solving problems.

He directed Kpakol to liaise with the Department of Emergency Relief to see what could be done to ameliorate the suffering of the hundreds of persons displaced as a result of the crisis.