

# Three die in Benue-Cross River border clash

**D**EFIANT militiamen fighting along the Mbakpeghe/Bebe area on the Benue-Cross River states border during the week, refused to acknowledge the presence of the Police. At least three persons were feared killed and over 2,000 displaced.

Efforts by the Benue and Cross River states governments to check the escalation of the crisis appear to have yielded no fruits, as the militiamen from both communities continue the clash thus making spending a night along the Mbakpeghe-Bebe border stretch very dangerous.

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*From Simeon Nwakaudu,  
Makurdi*

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By last Sunday night, the clash had resulted in the death of three.

The nocturnal fighting also led to the burning down of houses and schools in Mbakpeghe community.

When last Sunday night's fighting stopped at the early hours of Monday, the few persons left in the community fled to the Chiba village in Kwande Council, where they are camped amongst their kinsmen.

Even in far away Chiba village and others where

the Mbakpeghe people are camped, there is still tension as the people, mostly women and children, fear that they might be attacked by Bebe fighters, operating along the border, about 15 kilometres away.

Commenting on the crisis, the chairman of Kwande Local Council of Benue State, Mr. Terwase Orbunde appealed to the people to lay down their arms to allow for the demarcation of the disputed area.

He appealed to the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) to send relief materials to those displaced by the crisis,

noting that people were suffering untold hardship.

At the weekend, Mr. Chile Igbawua, member representing Kwande/Ushongo Federal Constituency called on the National Boundary Commission (NBC), to as a matter of urgency demarcate the disputed areas to allow for peace to reign, so that farmers can continue with their farming activities which has been disrupted by the land dispute.

The Benue-Cross River States boundary dispute started three weeks ago, when Bebe community leaders allegedly leased a fertile stretch to a firm.