

Two Feared Dead, Three Shot In Ebonyi Clash

From Leo Sobechi,
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TWO persons are believed to have died, while three others sustained gunshot wounds and two houses destroyed when youths from two neighbourhoods in Ngbo, Ohaukwu local government area of Ebonyi State, clashed over some misunderstanding that arose during the last Easter celebrations.

The Guardian learnt that many residents of Ndiroyibe clan have fled the area for fear of reprisal attack, after youths from their area beat one Erema Christian to death and inflicted gunshot injuries on three others.

Eye witness accounts said the current climate

Ebonyi

of fear ensued when youths from Ndiroyibe, at the height of the Easter celebrations, set up a barricade at Oriaja and started molesting youths from the neighbouring Amainyi.

But what first appeared as mere youthful display of ribaldry degenerated when the youths accosted Erema, who in a bid to resist the unwarranted assault, attracted heavier pummeling and clubbing — after which he slumped and went into a coma.

He gave up the ghost the following day, precisely on Easter Monday.

Youths from his village thereafter went into

a frenzy and burnt down a ramshackle stall belonging to one Eze Oselebe, said to be supportive of the excesses of the youths.

Youths from Ndiroyibe were said to have renewed their offensive after a senior official in the State Ministry of Commerce and Industry, who hails from the clan, went to the Secretary to the State Government, Fidelis Mbam, and secured assurances that the police would not arrest any of his kinsmen for the murder of Erema.

Mbam said when Oselebe brought the complaint about the disturbances to him, he informed the DPO that there had been a history of political disagree-

ment between two clans. He denied doing anything to benefit the Ndiroyibe youth.

He said the "original inaction of the DPO" was responsible for the renewed crisis, pointing out that there was no way he would be teaching the officer his job.

The Ebonyi State Police Public Relations Officer, Frederick N-Nuudam, however said the area is calm, adding that the command had drafted a unit of the Police Mobile Force and other plainclothes officers to the area.

"No arrest has so far been made, but we are sure that those behind the murder and the attempted murder would be arrested," he said.