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12 die in Imo community crisis

From Charles Ogugbuaja, Owerri

NO fewer than 12 persons have been reported dead and 70 houses razed by persons suspected to be cultists by yesterday, in a clash in Awara community in Ohaji /Egbema Local Council of Imo State.

According to a source, the cause of the killings and destructions was linked to a misunderstanding arising from alleged sharing formula for some money allocated to the community by an undisclosed oil company operating in the area.

Another version on the cause of the crisis claimed that a group of advance fee fraudsters came to the community and attempted to collect the money from the oil firm, thus igniting the crisis.

The State Police Commissioner, Innocent Illozuke, who confirmed the incident to journalists, said the figure of those killed was about 10.

He stated that the command had dispatched sufficient security men on ground to stop the crisis, warning that no one should fuel the crisis any further.

He added that anyone caught, would face the wrath of the law.

Meanwhile, the President of Awara Town Union, Mr. Ekwueme Ekwueme, who appealed for calm, regretted that the community had lost much, calling on the state government, the National Emergency Relief Management Agency (NEMA) and other non-governmental bodies to come to the aid of the victims.

His words: "I am giving my special appeal to relevant authorities to come to our aid. I tell you the community lost a lot of things. In this community, we lost almost 12 persons who were shot dead and over 70 houses were burnt. People were displaced from their houses."

Governor Ikedi Ohakim's Executive Assistant on Security, Chief Law Biador, has appealed for calm over the crisis, stressing that the state government would get to the root of the problem.

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