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Two die in Benue communal clash*From Simeon Nwakaudu, Makurdi*

TWO persons are feared dead in communal crisis between the people of Nyiev in Turan community and Uyoo in Nanev clan of Kwande Local Council of Benue State. Hundreds of residents were displaced while property estimated at millions of naira were also destroyed in the clash.

The crisis, which started last week, was over a piece of land adjudged to be fertile by the contenders in the two communities, as the first rains in the area came, which usually herald farming activities.

The Guardian learnt at the weekend that one of the communities moved into the area, which prompted the other to take counter-action to reclaim the land, an action that led to a fierce fighting between the villagers. The two communities allegedly engaged the services of militiamen.

Although the identities of the casualties could not be established, sources in the communities confirmed that two people were killed during the clash.

It was learnt that despite the pleas from the state government for calm, fighting had continued in the area, with militiamen setting some houses ablaze and inflicting injuries on unarmed persons.

Last Saturday, the Benue State Police Commissioner, Ibrahim Mohammed, led a team of mobile policemen to the area to prevail on the warring parties to lay down their arms. The commissioner, who was with some officials of the state government and the Kwande Local Council, told the leaders of the two communities that the police would begin the arrest of the ring leaders if fighting continued.

The Special Adviser to the Governor on Conflict Resolution, Mr. Titus Madugu and the Security Adviser to the Governor, Col. Benjamin Abohol, also appealed to the people to embrace peace.

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