

Nigerians need to drop every hindrance to peace and unity of the country by

progress. I wish to task Christian and Muslim leaders to preach harmony,

"Where there is love, forgiveness and selfless ambition, the problems of our

cautions for personal security and safety," the statement read.

One killed in Edo communal dispute

From ~~Alemma-Ozioruwa Aliu~~, Benin City

THERE is tension in Edo State as an age-long land dispute between the people of Iviukha in Weppa Wanno and Ikpele in Okpekpe clan, all in Etsako East Local Council of Edo State, has reportedly led to the death of a middle-aged man identified as Oseni Ekhameye, who was said to have died from severe machete cuts inflicted on him under the supervision of a prominent member of the community. One of his wives, Umoru Otsemobo who is said to be from Ikpele community, is now receiving treatment at the University of Benin teaching Hospital (UBTH) after surviving several machete cuts from the same persons who killed her husband.

The Guardian gathered yesterday that the incident, which happened on Sunday, had been a build-up of rift over

ownership of farmlands, which Ekhameye and his people had claimed ownership and alleged encroachment against the people of Ikpele.

The unsuspecting Ekhameye was said to have hired some labourers, who operate in groups, in his community to till his land that fateful Sunday morning.

His assailants were said to have earlier ravaged his farmland where they were said to have uprooted the crops he had earlier planted.

His wife had gone to the village to make the report of the incident when she overheard the people planning to attack her husband and immediately, she left the house of the community head, she was followed by a prominent member of the community with three newly sharpened cutlasses. She was said to be rushing to tell her husband in farm, which is less than a kilometre from the residence of

the village head, where she had gone to make her report about what she overheard the assailants planning when the assailants apparently lurking in a nearby bush attacked the late Ekhameye and the other labourers that have gone to his farm and under the supervision of a member of the community, the assailants inflicted deep cuts on his head and other parts of his body. They also allegedly descended on his wife, who was said to have feigned death before rescuers rushed them to a hospital in Agenebode, where her husband later died and she was transferred to UBTH.

When *The Guardian* visited the community yesterday, there was tension as youths in the area were threatening reprisal attacks as they said they would not allow their son to be killed "in such a dastard way."

The leaders of the community, have therefore, called on the

police and the state government to ensure justice is done.

A statement issued by the Iviukhua Progressive Union Worldwide and signed by its President General and General Secretary, High Chief Kennedy Izuagbe and Gabriel Inaede condemned the act.

"We condemn this callous act in the strongest possible terms. We also want to use this opportunity to appeal to the Nigeria Police Force, Edo State Command to ensure that they get to the root of this matter and bring all the miscreants who perpetrated this heinous crime to justice.

"Though some arrest have been made, some of the perpetrators of this dastardly act are still at large. Notable among them are the wife and son of the mastermind of the act, who according to eye witness, inflicted the machete cuts on Oseni Ekhameye.

"Let us recall that similar incidents have degenerated into communal clashes in some Nigerian communities that have snowballed into unmanageable proportions but Iviukhua, being a law-abiding community was able to prevail on her citizens, especially the youths, to prevent any reprisal attacks. We will like to state unequivocally that this peaceful approach by Iviukhua community must not be misconstrued for weakness." The Edo State Police Public Relations Officer, Moses Eguavone (DSP) confirmed the incident to *The Guardian* when he said: "It was a reported case of wounded originally but the victim eventually died while receiving treatment. The case was first reported at Agenebode Division before it was transferred to the state CID. Arrests have been made and the police will ensure that justice is done and those who are found culpable prosecuted accordingly."

Holy Friday, Great Friday, or Black Friday. On this day, some Christians, especially faithful of the Catholic Church, refrain from eating beef (meat) to share in the

nature as well as snaring in it. Also, the General Overseer of Powerline Bible Church, Lagos, Bishop Lawrence Osagie, has enjoined Nigerians to emulate the selfless life of Jesus Christ.