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Two-day-old baby rescued in communal clash

By Odita Sunday | 10 November 2016 | 6:00 am



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The rescued new-born

400 structures burnt, eight feared dead as police quell inter-tribal squabble in Lekki

Violent clash erupted yesterday in Lekki area of Lagos State, between two communities over a piece of land, leading to the displacement of thousands of residents and about 400 structures burnt, while a two-day-old baby was rescued by the police in the melee.

The Guardian learnt that the crisis, which began on Monday, snowballed into a violent clash yesterday morning between two communities in Otodogbami area of Ikate, Lekki Phase 1.

A battle of supremacy in the area had triggered the clash between the Egun-speaking community, mostly indigenes of Benin Republic and the Yoruba speaking community resulting in serious fighting and burning of houses.

Irate youths from the two communities set hundreds of structures and shanties ablaze while pandemonium ensued in the area as residents ran amok to avert being killed.

A resident, who craved anonymity, accused the police of complicity in the matter, saying that when the police came, they were shooting directly into houses, an action which forced residents to flee through the waterway.

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He said eight people reportedly drowned as they were trying to escape through the waterway on a canoe, which capsized in the middle of the river. But the police could not confirm the boat mishap.

The Police Public Relation Officer (PPRO), Lagos State Police Command, Dolapo Badmos, confirmed the clash, saying that the police immediately moved into the area to prevent further breakdown of law and order.

Giving a background of what transpired, she said: "There is an Egun community mainly made up of people from Republic of Benin. They actually occupied illegal shanties. We were alerted about the breakdown of law and order in the area and immediately went to check Otodogbami community, Ikate Lekki Phase 1, where there was a fight between the Benin- Yoruba communities fighting over the supremacy of the territory."

"It's an illegal settlement area, most of the structures there are shanties and because of a protracted dispute between them, they set fire on their different shanties. The police moved into the area to restore peace and in the process of checking the area, we discovered that there was a woman, who was trapped in one of the shanties with a two-day old baby. They would have been burnt in the process," she said.

Badmos also appealed to both factions in the community to remain lawful and shun acts of violence that could trigger civil unrest.

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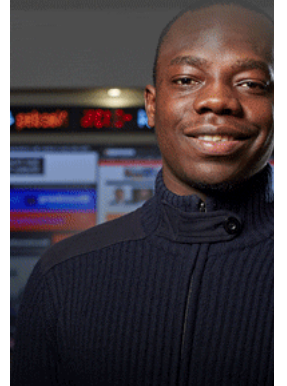
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