

Bloodbath in Oleh, residents cry out to Buhari, Okowa

By **Adamu Abuh, Abuja**
18 October 2020 | 3:00 am

Tragedy struck, yesterday, as no fewer than nine persons were murdered in cold blood in Oleh, Isoko South Council of Delta State. The unfortunate incident, believed to have been masterminded by assailants from the neighbouring Ozoro town, on Friday, threw Oleh residents into deep mourning.

Rights activist, Dr. Ogaga Ifowodo, in a statement, called on President Muhammadu Buhari and Governor Ifeanyi Okowa to act swiftly to prevent a needless bloodbath, an unmanageable refugee situation, and the general horrors associated with wars and civil unrest. He also called for the immediate arrest and prosecution of the murderers and their abettors.

He noted: “They must face the full wrath of the law for not only their complete disregard for human life but also for scorning the courts of law where the dispute over which they have committed multiple murders is already being litigated.

“Oleh is well-known as a peace-loving community, home to all Isokos ever since it was the original headquarters of the old Isoko Division of Mid-West State. Oleh does not have land disputes with her other neighbours — Olomoro, Emede, and Irri, with whom she shares virtually merged boundaries.

“I also call on the leaders of Ozoro community to make peace and good neighbourliness their watchword. Above all, to prove their bona fides and love of justice by fishing out those among them who committed cold-blooded murders and surrendering them to justice. There can be no amount of land worth the lives of the 9 human beings brutally murdered nor the bloodbath and unmitigated human suffering that result from war.”

“Nigeria is currently numbed by the unrelenting bloodshed and violence in the land — from herdsmen’s land-grabbing atrocities, Boko Haram’s crimes against humanity in the name of fighting for God, kidnappings, etc. We must, however, not be rendered so insensate as to ignore this clear flashpoint of bloody warfare in a strategic, oil-rich swath of the Niger Delta. A stitch in time saves nine, so goes the adage. Nine are already dead. I call on President Buhari and Governor Okowa to ensure that a stitch in time saves ninety, nine hundred or more.”

Reminiscing the genesis of the conflict between the communities, he said: “For some years now, Ozoro has been disputing ownership of lands at its border with Oleh. The Delta State government is very much aware of the dispute and had set up a conflict resolution committee headed, as I’m informed, by one Chief Edwin Uzor, a Special Assistant to Governor Okowa.

“The Oleh family that owns the land in dispute lost confidence in Chief Uzor’s patently biased efforts at dispute resolution and took their case to an objective tribunal: the High Court of Justice. I don’t know if it is true, but I’m informed that his wife is from Ozoro, making him partial to his in-laws. “An understandable disposition but then he should



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have recused himself from adjudicating in the matter. The next hearing of the matter is less than a week away,

