

Ondo communal clash claims two, palace, buildings razed

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Two persons on Monday lost their lives in a communal clash that occurred in Iwaro in the Akoko South West Local Council Area of Ondo State.

The crisis started in the community on Sunday following a violent clash between youths from the Oka Odo, Ebo, and Owake quarters.

According to sources, youths from Oka Odo who were on a hunting expedition were attacked by their counterparts from Ebo, who had mistaken them for those from Owake.

With Ebo and Owake youths involved in an age-long dispute over unresolved land dispute, the Oka Odo youths in retaliation mobilized and invaded the Ebo community.

While those who were injured in the brawl are currently receiving treatment in the hospital, the violent clash also led to the incident of arson with the Palace of Asin of Oka-Odo, a residential building and an event hall razed.

One of the sources said, “Oka-Odo Community was attacked on Sunday night by suspected hoodlums allegedly from the neighbouring Ebo community.

“As I speak, both the palace and the event hall have been completely destroyed, and several houses were set on fire. Sadly, a house belonging to Mr. Omorinbola Francis, also known as Ekoru, was burnt to the ground, and efforts to extinguish the flames proved futile.

“Earlier that same day, members of the Owake Community had gone to install signposts on lands along Ikun Road, acting in line with an Appeal Court judgement that affirmed their ownership of the disputed lands.

“However, on their way back, members of the Owake Community were ambushed by suspected thugs, who launched a violent attack, leaving many injured. The injured residents were promptly transported to the newly commissioned Federal Medical Centre in GRA for medical attention.”

Meanwhile, the Commissioner of Police in the state, Wilfred Afolabi, has called for peace with an appeal to all parties involved to sheathe their swords, stressing that violence and property destruction would only result in stagnation and underdevelopment.

In a statement issued by the Police Public Relations Officer, Funmilayo Odunlami-Omisanya, a police team led by the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP Ops) had been deployed to the area to restore peace and prevent further escalation.

She said: “The CP urges the communities to seek peaceful resolutions to their disputes to avoid further loss of lives and property while assuring residents that the police would ensure that the perpetrators of violence on both sides are brought to justice.”