

One Killed As Farmers Clash In Bayelsa



By Jessica Okonkwo On Oct 16, 2024

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In the Yenagoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa State, the residents of the Akaibiri and Bumoundi communities have reportedly battled with Anam farmers engaged in commercial farming, resulting in one fatality and the burning of a farm settlement.

In the majority of Bayelsa State, the Anam people from Anambra State have been running farm villages to grow crops for market.

The issue began on October 6 when a member of the Bumoundi community named Mr. Apah Abel was allegedly killed at the farm settlement on suspicion of stealing. It was reported that the natives of Bumoundi and Akaibiri retaliated by burning the farm village.

Two people have already been arrested in connection with Abel's murder, according to the Bayelsa State Police Command, which also cautioned the residents of the Akaibiri and Bumoundi towns and Anam farmers against enforcing the law on their own.

Speaking at a meeting with the state deputy governor, as well as stakeholders from the two communities and farmers, on Tuesday, Bayelsa State Commissioner of Police Alonyenu Idu, represented by Deputy Commissioner of Police Gabriel Elaigwu, in charge of the State Criminal Investigation Department, confirmed that the two suspects suspected of killing Apah were already in police custody and pledged to conduct a thorough investigation.

To preserve the state's current peace, law, and order, the state government has urged non-indigenous people to respect the established authorities wherever they live. In a meeting with members of the Akaibiri and Bumoundi communities, as well as Anam farmers, the state deputy governor, Senator Lawrence Ewhrudjakpo, made this statement and advised the farmers to use moderation.

In a statement, Ewhrudjakpo's Senior Special Assistant on Media, Mr. Doubara Atasi, emphasized the necessity for non-indigenous people to respect the laws and customs of their host communities in order to promote harmonious coexistence.

As part of attempts to improve the identification and arrest of criminals who commit crimes in the state, he stated that going forward, landlords must appropriately introduce guests to community leadership. In order to maintain peace and stability in the state, he also advised community leaders to live in their respective areas and be mindful of their duties.

He said: "I want to appeal that all our communities in Ekpetiama should maintain the peace. CP should also liaise with other security agencies and maintain some security presence in the area until this matter is properly laid to rest.

"We encourage all our communities to have vigilantes so that this idea of self-help will be minimised. Because if the vigilantes were doing their job, this would not happen. And to the Anam people, you don't have the right to kill a thief. You only have the right to catch a thief and hand the person over to law enforcement agents.

"If they are stealing your property, don't resort to self help, report to the police and your host communities. You need to communicate this to all your people wherever they are in Ijawland."

The Ibenanaowei of Ekpetiama Clan, HRM King Bubaraye Dakolo (Agada IV), thanked the state government for quickly intervening in the matter to forestall a breakdown of law and order.

King Dakolo called on the Anam farmers to respect the current culture and traditions and acknowledge the leadership structure in their host communities, while also urging the police to make sure that those responsible for the murder of

the dead and the burning of the Anam farm settlements face the full force of the law.

Chief Bernard Ozoekwe, speaking on behalf of the Anam farmers, thanked the state government for its swift action, describing them as peaceful individuals who have farmed in the state for more than 20 years. He assured them that the farmers would follow the law in their host communities.