

How 15 People Were Killed In Jigawa Communal Clash – Residents

State govt holds peace meeting with feuding parties | Security agencies patrol affected villages

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Details of the communal clash in Gululu village of Miga local government area of Jigawa State have emerged as residents gave accounts of the tragic incident.

According to eyewitnesses, 15 people were killed during the crisis which occurred on Friday.

To prevent it from escalating, the state government promptly held an emergency peace meeting with the feuding parties who were mostly herders and farmers in the area.

The meeting was attended by the speaker of the State House of Assembly, the chairmen of the two local government areas, district heads, Miyetti Allah leadership and some vigilante groups.

The meeting, according to sources, centered on maintaining law and order, avoiding violence, propaganda and reprisals.

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Some of the residents who spoke with LEADERSHIP Sunday claimed that the conflict resulted from an allegation of burglary and theft of Hibiscus (Zobarodo) from a store in Gululu village of Miga local government area.

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They said it turned into a bloody clash when miscreants and some hunters hijacked it.

Before the crisis broke out on Friday, the state government had taken measures to tackle the perennial farmers-herders' clashes, including demarcating and improving grazing reserves, providing free veterinary and medical services, farmers' empowerment, establishment of a farmers-herders conflict resolution board, and

the efforts have so far yielded fruits by curbing conflicts.

The residents said the latest clash still involved farmers and herders' communities, and it opened a new faultline in the mutual suspicion and occasional direct conflicts between the two villages in the state.

Narrating the incident, a resident of Gululu village, Malam Bako Ibrahim, said it took everyone by surprise because it started with a mere allegation of theft against some suspected youth herders, but in the process of tracing the suspects, the situation degenerated into violence.

He said some residents of Gululu community identified the suspected thieves who they said were from Yankiunama village of Jahun local government, a neighbouring community of Fulani herders.

Malam Bako said some people, including hunters, were said to have gone to Yankunama to arrest the suspected thieves and retrieve the stolen properties but on their arrival, they met stiff resistance from some miscreants and in the process one person was killed and four others were seriously injured.

Other residents, who spoke with our correspondent on the matter, preferred anonymity because of its sensitive nature.

According to Bako, Gululu community members then retreated and mobilised more people for a heavy attack on Yankunama village. This resulted in an all-out violence which led to the death of about 15 people while many others were injured.

The state police command's spokesman, SP Shisu Adam, said they received information from Gululu village that a group of miscreants suspected to be youth herders broke into a shop and stole a quantity of Hibiscus and other items.

The report added that some villagers (Hausawa) traced the suspected thieves to the Fulani settlement in Yankunama village.

On sighting the team, the suspected thieves started shooting arrows at them, seriously wounding four persons.

"Hence the villagers mobilised and started attacking the Fulanis and setting their houses ablaze at various locations within Miga and Jahun LGAs," he said.

Shisu added that upon receipt of the report, a team of police officers from Miga and Jahun divisions rushed to the scene to assess the situation and restore peace and order.

He said nine bodies were recovered and were taken to Jahun and Miga hospitals where medical doctors on duty confirmed them dead. It was, however, gathered that the death toll was up to 15.

The Jigawa State commissioner of Police, A.T. Abdullahi alongside the area commander in Dutse, the assistant commissioner, operations, mobile police commander, EOD and other senior officers equally visited the scene.

In the meantime, patrols are being stepped up in the general area to prevent further breakdown of law and order, as the situation had been brought under control as at Saturday.

The police said an investigation was in progress to bring the perpetrators to justice and so far, five people have been arrested in connection with the crisis.

"Unfortunately, nine bodies were recovered. The corpses were ferried to Jahun and Miga Hospitals, where the medical doctor on duty confirmed their deaths," the police spokesperson said.