

Seven feared killed in Delta communal clash

NO fewer than seven persons, including an expectant woman, are feared killed in Ukwuani Local Government Area of Delta State in a communal crisis between the people of Amai and Umuebu.

The fate of the traditional ruler of Amai (names withheld) was uncertain as at press time; but rumour was rife that he might be one of those beheaded in the crisis.

The monarch's property, including two petrol stations and his country home, were completely razed down by irate youths from Umuebu, it was learnt.

The killing of an expectant woman by youths suspected to be from Amai was said to have led to the fresh hostilities.

Her lifeless body was recovered on Monday, 10 days after she was abducted.

Her kinsmen of Umuebu launched a revenge on Amai community.

Armed youths from Amai stormed Umuebu as early as

From Shola O'Neil, Warri
4.00a.m. yesterday. During the attack, at least five persons were reportedly killed, including a non-indigene who was beheaded.

Scores of houses and properties worth several millions of naira were also razed in the attack.

Eyewitnesses said the Umuebu survivors of the attack fled to Ubiaruku, where they narrated their ordeals to their kinsmen and sympathisers.

"The report of the atrocities carried out by the Amai people at Umuebu led to a strong feeling of hatred and whipped up sentiments against the Amai people. The youths of the town and their Umuebu brothers then launched a reprisal attack on anybody that is of Amai extraction," the source added.

The traditional ruler's properties in Ubiaruku were

also targeted. Two of his petrol stations on the Eku-Agbor Road were burnt.

His whereabouts were unknown as at press time last night.

Inhabitants of the warring communities are seeking refuge outside in neighbouring villages, ostensibly because of fears of reprisal attacks and killings by both sides.

The Joint Task Force (JTF) code named 'Operation Restore Hope', confirmed that a monarch was among five established deaths, adding that troops had been deployed in the area to restore calm.

JTF's Col. Rabe Abubakar, said: "At least, a monarch and five other indigenes of Umuebu, were feared dead due to the early morning invasion of March 19 of the community by youths of Amai."

Col. Abubakar said the communities have been placed under close watch to stop the crisis from escalating.

"The JTF will not hesitate to deal with any individual or group, who may want to derail government's fine plan for Niger Delta. Nonetheless, all law-abiding citizens are free to go about their legitimate business," Col. Abubakar said.

Police spokesman Charles Muka confirmed the incident.

He said Police Commissioner Jacob Oshomogbo was on his way to the scene for first-hand information on the incident.

The communities have been locked in a dispute over a piece of land for decades.

Past administrations had made efforts to amicably resolve the dispute, all to no avail.

Governor Emmanuel Uduaghan has dispatched his Special Adviser on Land Security, Chief Sheriff Oborevwori, to the area.