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Death toll rises to 13 in Delta attacks

Posted by: Shola O'Neil and Emmanuel Oladesu in News 13 hours ago 0

The death toll from attacks on Itsekiri communities in Warri North Local Government Area of Delta State increased to 13 yesterday as more bodies were recovered from the bushes.

The victims include a couple, two brothers, an aged man and an infant, who were killed in the various communities razed by the rampaging Ijaw group, Egbema Radical Group.

The Itsekiri National Youth Council (INYC) said their kinsmen won't retaliate.

Speaking when various Itsekiri youth groups visited him in his home in Warri, INYC Chairman David Tonwe said: "I appeal to you not to be used to foment trouble; we are not prepared to fight.

"We have lost 13 of our brothers and sisters; let's all ensure that it does not escalate.

"We have just come out from a crisis (Ijaw/Itsekiri) and we are not prepared to take that road again. Nobody who witnessed that crisis would encourage what just happened.

"So, I want to appeal to everybody to remain calm and hope that the law will take its course."

An Itsekiri chief, Mrs. Rita Lori-Igiebor, urged Ijaw leaders, President Goodluck Jonathan and Chief Edwin Clark, to stop the carnage.

She told reporters in Lagos that the neglect, repression and onslaught against the Itsekiri were worrisome.

The Itsekiri chief said the solution to the persistent clashes is the creation of Itsekiri state.

She dismissed the claim by the restless Ijaw youths that the Itsekiri were the main beneficiaries of the oil block allocations in the Niger Delta.

The Itsekiri chief said: "The allegations are not true. The Itsekiri did not benefit from the oil blocks.

"They were not the big contractors. They were not the big, illegal bunkerers. They were not the petty oil thieves. I advise the Ijaw youths to concentrate and get meaningful sources of living.

"The solution is the creation of an Itsekiri state. We are a minority blessed with oil and two ports. The President is Ijaw. The Minister of Niger Delta Affairs is an Ijaw. All the ministries and agencies are managed by the Ijaw man. They have the money to take care of the Ijaw. They should not make life uncomfortable for others."

The Special Adviser to the President on Niger Delta, Kingsley Kuku, also condemned the attacks.

In a statement in Abuja, Kuku urged security agencies to ensure that the perpetrators are brought to justice.

He called on Itsekiri and Ijaw leaders to intervene to avert an escalation of the crisis.

The Special Adviser appealed to security agencies to restore peace in the area.

"The violence in Warri North is a sad development and we are very concerned. This is so because it affects youths of two ethnic groups that have a long history of fraternal and marital relationships.

"We will work with the state government to ensure that the crisis does not escalate. I implore the aggrieved parties to sheathe their swords while the issues are being addressed," Kuku said.

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22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

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