

8 feared killed in renewed Ebonyi, Cross River boundary dispute

No fewer than eight persons are feared dead, while several others received varying degrees of injuries following resumed hostilities in the boundary dispute between the people of Ochienyim community in Amagu, Ikwo Local Government Area of Ebonyi State and the people of Adadama community in Abi Local Government Area of Cross River State. It was reliably gathered that five of the dead are from Cross River, while three are from Ebonyi.

A community leader in Amagu Ikwo, who spoke to our reporter on grounds of anonymity, said the clash erupted after some women from Ochienyim, who went to the farm to harvest cassava, were allegedly attacked by unknown assailants, suspected to

be from Adadama.

According to the source, the assailants attempted to abduct the women, but were resisted by the youths who accompanied them.

"Few hours after the earlier invasion, the Adadama youths, went back and mobilized more youths numbering more than 30 and invaded the community with dangerous weapons, shooting sporadically at the people.

"By the time they left the community having sacked everybody, we came back to count our losses and at the last count, three members of our community were already lying dead while several others sustained various degrees of gunshot injuries."

Spokesman of the Police in Ebonyi State, George Okafor, confirmed the incident.

■ Ogochukwu ANIOKE, ■
Abakaliki

He disclosed that two persons were killed in Ebonyi during the attack.

"I can tell you that normalcy has been restored in the area, but not without casualties on both sides. The Commissioner of Police had visited the place to see things for herself", he said.

"What I want to say is that this boundary war has reached the extent whereby the powers that be, the governors of the two states, not just sending representatives, but should go out there for them to urgently do

the needful to sort out the problem.

"Either, both communities are asked to stop going to the disputed area completely and government takes over the place or government may as well invite the boundary commission to actually demarcate the land, so that the problem would be put to an end."

Across the border, the people of Adadama, it was gathered lost five people, even as three others were seriously wounded in the recent outbreak of violence.

A source in the community, who pleaded anonymity, said four persons from Abi were

killed when some Adadama women went to their farms to harvest cassava on Tuesday, June 21.

It was gathered that the Director-General of Primary Health Care Development Agency, Dr. Betta Edu, visited the injured, identified as John Edward (16), Emmanuel George (20) and Lebo Linus (17), who are currently receiving treatment at the University of Calabar Teaching Hospital (UCTH).

The State Security Adviser (SSA), Mr. Jude Ngaji, according to reports, said that relative calm has returned to the community.

"Immediately the crisis broke, I called my colleague in Ebonyi State, because we have been talking. There is a joint boundary committee between Ebonyi and Cross River to resolve that crisis.

"The Cross River Police Commissioner also called the Ebonyi Police Commissioner and a detachment of mobile policemen were immediately moved in there to calm the situation. I can tell you that relative calm has returned and we intend to keep the police there for some time to ensure that the peace is not disrupted while the talking is ongoing."

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