

# 20 feared killed in communal clash

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No fewer than 20 people were feared killed yesterday in Ugya, Toto local government area of Nasarawa state in a communal clash that erupted between the Ebira and Bassa ethnic groups.

A member of the vigilante group in the area Yahaya Toto said the Bassa people were seen moving out of Ugya village in large numbers on Monday.

He said: “On seeing that Bassa people were leaving the town, some of our people started to move out in panic but were prevailed upon to stay back because no reason was offered by the Bassa people to warrant them deserting their ancestral home”.

Another vigilante leader who craved anonymity alleged that the Bassa people had engaged the services of mercenaries who attacked the Ebira people in the early hours yesterday killing many and burning down houses.

He said the mercenaries, clad in red, stormed the rural town on motorcycles and started shooting sporadically forcing residents to flee to the bush, who were still chased after and hacked to death.

“As soon as soldiers arrived the town, the mercenaries deserted the town although one has been captured,” he added.

Police spokesman Kennedy Idirisu told our reporter in Lafia that the skirmish was a spill-over of the attacks in Kogi.

“We received information about the crisis this morning and our findings revealed that the situation is a spill over from the crisis in Kogi state over the weekend,” he said.

Idirisu said although the Police could not ascertain the casualty figure, they were doing their best to contain the situation and avert bloodletting.

He said Nasarawa State Commissioner of Police Ahmed Bello had directed the deployment of men from the New Karu and Keffi area commands to reinforce the personnel on ground in the area.

Kogi State Police Spokesman William Ovyie told our correspondent on telephone that the attack in Bassa local government of Kogi state on Sunday led to the death seven persons with many houses razed.