

Many killed in Benue, Abia, Akwa Ibom boundary clashes

1 **S** EVEN persons were yesterday reported killed on the outskirts of Makurdi, the Benue State capital, following fresh hostilities between two communities over land.

Radio Nigeria Harvest FM station in the area has been shut and staff sent home for fear of being caught in the crossfire.

Houses were set ablaze and other property destroyed, it was learnt.

Police spokesperson Kate Anene did not respond to calls or text messages.

2 In Usaka Ukwu and Nkaria, two communities on two sides of the Abia and Akwa Ibom border, an unspecified number of persons have been killed in a land tussle.

Usaka Ukwu is in Ikwuano council area of Abia where

•Buhari warns against resort to self-help

From Sunny Nwankwo,
Umuahia, and Bolaji
Ogundele, Abuja

some accounts claimed that six persons were killed while a larger number of people have been hospitalised in parts of the state.

The clash, which took place on Monday, forced many from their homes, the reporter learned.

Both communities have been at loggerheads over land for years.

The clash lasted from 10pm to 5am, it was said, but within that time, no security agency intervened.

It was gathered that the government of the two states have met over the land under con-

tention and were waiting for the National Boundary Commission (NBC) to delineate it.

Police spokesman in Abia Geoffrey Ogbonna told the reporter on the phone that he was yet to receive any recent clash report in the area.

Information Commissioner John Okiyi-Kalu confirmed the incident but denied that many people died, saying one person was killed.

"As a government, we condemn in totality the act of violence. The National Boundary Commission has visited the area and very soon they will delineate the boundaries properly. We are calling on the communities involved to exercise restraint and avoid shedding of blood."

President Muhammadu Buhari warned ethnic groups not to resort to self-help or revenge attacks.

The President gave the warning while reacting to the killing of 11 persons in Gwer council area of Benue State, as well as the mob action that claimed some lives in Anambra State.

In a statement issued by his Senior Special Assistant on Media and Publicity, Mallam Garba Shehu, the President condemned the two incidents.

"I totally condemn this latest unprovoked violence and counter-attacks on innocent people that had nothing to do with the cause of the violence.

"If we allow this culture of violence to go unchecked, such mobs would destroy law and order," he said.