

Many killed, houses razed in Akwa Ibom clash

From Bassey Anthony, Uyo

A CLASH between the Ibeno and Ilaje in Akwa Ibom State has left many dead and houses razed. Our correspondent learnt the incident erupted yesterday after weeks of ethnic tension.

Properties worth millions were destroyed.

A community source said both sides suffered casualties but he could not confirm the death toll.

Sources said the fight started as a cult clash before it took an ethnic dimension. The Ilaje (Yoruba) people have reportedly started fleeing the community, while their houses and tents were being looted and destroyed by hoodlums.

Police spokesman Odiko Macdon said he was not aware of the crisis, promising to find out.

He said, "I am not aware of it but I will find out."

A lawyer, Oluwajuwon Ogunbiyi, who confirmed the incident, described it as unfortunate and called on the state government to set up a committee to investigate the crisis.

"It is quite unfortunate that this crisis has led to the loss of innocent lives and destruction of properties. The Ibeno community had been a good host over the decades and non-indigenes have been living there in harmony without rancour.

"I'm using this medium to appeal for peace and an end to hostilities from both warring parties. I also want to call on the Governor of Akwa Ibom State as well as heads of all security agencies in the state to intervene in the matter immediately in order to stem down this waves of violence.

"The state government must as a matter of urgency set up a committee to look into this crisis so as to ascertain the major cause. Perpetrators fanning the embers of war on both sides must be arrested immediately," he said.

Abductees demand N100m to free captives