

# Clash claims five lives in Edo, as police say joint operation ongoing



Five persons were last night confirmed dead by Edo Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Moses Yamu, a Chief Superintendent of Police (CSP), adding that four other persons were also injured in the clash between cocoa farmers and alleged produce thieves at Gbelemotin in Ovia Southwest Local Government Area of Edo.

Yamu said: "The clash involved Gbelemotin and Maidoti communities in the same Ovia Southwest LGA of **Edo State**.

"Joint operation by police with the Army, other security agencies and vigilance members is ongoing, and the situation has been brought under control.

"Investigation into the cause of the clash has also commenced."

Our reporter gathered that the clash started on Thursday night, but escalated on Friday, with many houses burnt in the communities.

It was learnt that an Ikale cocoa farmer hired some vigilance members to guard his cocoa farm, which had been invaded by some suspected Izon Boys, while the vigilance members killed five of the Izon Boys on Thursday.

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The Friday morning's counter- attack was carried out by some Izon Boys who were sympathetic to the five boys, who were allegedly killed by the vigilance members.

A major stakeholder in the area, who spoke in confidence, said: "The Izon Boys were stealing produce belonging to a Yoruba man. The boys are from Kolombor (Gbelemotin).

"On Friday morning, there was a counterattack. Soldiers and other security personnel have been deployed in the area.

"The cocoa the boys were stealing belonged to Yoruba farmers in the area, particularly at Madotti Camp."

The source also described the incident as unfortunate, but avoidable, while urging the youths to always be meaningfully engaged.