

NO fewer than four people in Inyima community in Yakurr Local Government Area of Cross River State have been killed after an invasion allegedly by the people of Adun in Obubra Local Government Area.

Three persons have been hospitalised.

According to residents of Inyima, several people are still missing.

When The Nation visited the community yesterday, several houses, shops, market and even the health centre lay in ruins.

It was like a town that had lost its soul. In the blinding sunshine, the shrilling voice of a woman who had lost a son, pierced the air. The putrid stench of burnt human flesh and houses hung in the hot air.

A burnt body, the size of a fully grown man, lay rotting by the street. The head was missing.

The community was almost deserted, as most of its residents had fled to neighbouring communities.

It was gathered that Adun community had always laid claim to Inyama land.

The build-up to the incident started last Thursday when some Adun youths allegedly caught an Inyima youth stealing cassava in a farm on the boundary of the communities. The suspect was handed over to the police.

The acting village head, Benedict Egbe, said the following day, some women who went to the farm to harvest cassava ran back, saying they saw battle-ready Adun youths there.

Egbe said he sent some youths to the farm to confirm and the police were contacted.

A former councillor in Inyima, Emmanuel Ekor, said the presence of policemen in the area doused the tension.

“But on Sunday at about 11am, hundreds of Adun youths armed with sophisticated weapons invaded our community, killing and destroying everything in their path.

“The mayhem lasted about four hours as the invaders went from house to house destroying and burning down everything.”

A 30-year old man, Enang Joseph Oden, was shot in front of his home. An unidentified man was beheaded and burnt on the street.

An unidentified man was also killed and burnt inside his house.

Enang’s wife, Rachel, said when they heard gunshots, her husband escaped with her and the children to a neighbouring community.

She said he was shot in front of their house when he returned to get some of their things.

“They destroyed everything we had. Even the small things I was selling they destroyed. Now I am left with nothing. How do I take care of our five children?” she cried.

The late Enang’s father, Joseph, said that they were at home on Sunday morning when he heard the commotion and everybody started running.

“The people carried pump action guns and they were shooting everywhere. They were burning houses and killing people. The policemen were nowhere to be found.

“They killed my son right here, right in front of our house. Adun people said they own this land that we are living on, but it is our land. We did not even know they were going to attack us like that,” he said.

Deputy Governor Efiok Cobham called on Inyima people not to consider retaliation and urged them to help security agencies with information that would lead to the arrest of those responsible for the mayhem.