

Two Dead, 20 Injured in Community Crisis

No fewer than two persons have been reported dead in an intra-community clash at Ofeme-Ohuhu in Umuahia North Local Government Area, which has left 20 people with various degrees of injury and 50 families made refugees in neighbouring communities.

The cause of the crisis, which started last Friday, our source gathered was as a result of disagreement between the leaders of the community and the youths over leadership matters. An eye witness account reported that both those who died and the injured were allegedly hit from by sporadic shooting of the men of the joint military and police patrol in the state, who were invited by one of the men involved in the crisis. When Governor Theodore Orji visited the community to see things for himself, he was alarmed by the wonton destruction of property in the community.

Commenting on the cause of the crisis, the governor said that government will only give staff of office and recognition to traditional rulers who have the support of their people, rather than those who impose themselves on the people and urged the people to remain calm and go about their normal businesses without fear as no meaningful development can take place in an atmosphere of violence and destruction.

Chief Orji commended the out-gone transition chairman of Umuahia North, Chief Dickson Nwosu, for his timely intervention which arrested the situation. Earlier in their speeches, president general of Ofeme community, Chief Mike Ibebunjo, and the village head, Chief Steven Kanu, alleged that the problem was between Umuezike community and Chief Emenike Mbaraonye, who had tried to impose himself on the community as village head.

They disclosed that Chief Mbaraonye arrested and detained many of his kinsmen in the police station over the problem that started many years ago and called on government to come to their rescue.

Also, spokesmen of the displaced people, Chief Emenike Mgbaronye and Chief Oliver Eze, had while speaking with newsmen, called on the state and local governments to come to their aid to save the community from further destruction of lives and property and break down of law and order.

The displaced people, who thronged the council headquarters last Tuesday, lamented the situation they found themselves in, saying they have no place to live. When contacted, the former transition committee chairman of the Umuahia North local government, Chief Dickson Nwosu, decried the development and called on the people of Ofeme to avoid crisis, but to embrace peace through dialogue in the community.