

2 killed, several houses burnt in Benue communal clash

One person died, 3 already arrested —Police

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ABOUT two people were reportedly killed, while many others were injured and several houses razed down in a renewed communal clash between the people of Mbassombo and Mbaivur settlements in Ikpayongo in Gwer East Local Government Area of Benue State.

The communal clash, which started on Sunday, according to residents, continued till Monday.

It was gathered from residents that Mbassombo youths allegedly launched an attack on Mbaivur settlement for allegedly killing one of their indigenes identified as Ayagwa Amu while in his farm on Sunday.

In a reprisal, youths from Mbaivur were said to have

stormed Mbassombo settlement, attacking the people and burning down houses.

The national president of Mbassombo Development Association, Anchongo Abar, told newsmen that trouble started when an elderly man from the area, Ayagwa Amu, was hacked to death with a machete on Sunday by youths suspected to have come from Mbaivur community.

"Prior to that day, the same

youths from Mbaivur had allegedly attacked one Igbasue Ayagwa with machete while in the farm; although he did not die, he is receiving treatment in the hospital.

"The Mbassombo youths, in a reprisal on Monday, razed several houses belonging to the Mbaivur people, including the family house of the Coordinator of Health, Catholic Diocese of Makurdi, Reverend Father Peter Paleve, and killed

one Dekuran Nor," Abar said.

Abar further explained that Mbaivur people accused some of the traditional rulers and the local government chairman of fueling the crisis, even as he called on the government to sanction anyone found having a hand in the crisis.

However, the Benue State police command spokesperson, DSP Catherine Anene, confirmed the incident.

She, however, said one per-

son was killed and 10 houses were razed down.

The police spokesperson added that three persons had been arrested in connection with the incident.

"Yes, the incident is true; I can confirm it. One casualty was recorded and about 10 houses burnt down following the clashes. Three persons have been arrested," Anene said in a text message sent to the *Nigerian Tribune*.