

# Three die as communities fight over land in Edo

**'Suyi Ayodele | Benin-City**

NO fewer than three persons were reportedly killed following a boundary dispute between Sabongida-Ora, headquarters of Owan West Local Government Area of Edo State, and Uhonmora-Ora, another community in the council area.

**Nigerian Tribune** gathered that the crisis started on Sunday when some people went to measure the land at the boundary between the two communities.

The demarcation exercise, it was further gathered, infuriated youths of both communities, who mobilised to the area and started fighting each other, using dangerous weapons.

The development forced schools and businesses in the area to hurriedly close

as the warring youths engaged in a battle of ownership of the disputed boundary point.

A source in the area who preferred anonymity said: "The crisis started three days ago when some people went to measure the land at the boundary between the two communities and they were attacked.

The source added that the motorcycles used in transporting people to the area were destroyed.

"As I speak to you now, nobody is moving to Uhonmora from Sabongida and vice versa for fear of being killed. Three persons have been killed so far. We can no longer move freely," he claimed.

Youths from both communities blocked the Ifon-Iruekpen federal road for

almost the three days, paralysing commercial and other activities in the areas, just as motorists were prevented from passing through the communities.

The member representing Owan federal constituency in the House of Representatives, Professor Julius Ihonvbere, has, however, called on the warring factions to embrace peace.

Ihonvbere, who stated this in a statement, said: "I am unhappy over this ugly incident that has created unrest, tension and closure of business activities in Owan West. This is coming at a time when we should be joining hands to mobilise resources to empower our women and youths. It is so sad to see persons of the same family turn on one another. It is also a reflection

of intolerance, unemployment and lack of investment in Owan West.

"I sympathise with the families of the victims, including those injured in the fracas. I call on traditional, religious, community and political leaders to urgently wade into the matter with a view to restoring lasting peace and harmony."

When contacted, the Edo State police command said a team of mobile policemen had been dispatched to the area to join forces with those on the ground to restore peace.

The state's Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Bello Kontongs, who made this disclosure, added that, "the situation in the area, as of today (Wednesday), is a lot calmer than it was on Tuesday."