

# Two killed, one missing in Benue communal clash

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TWO persons were reportedly killed in a communal clash between Tse Njor and Opaha Adoka communities in Gwer West and Otukpo local government areas of Benue State.

During the crisis, four persons were reported to have been injured and one person missing.

The incident, which started over the weekend, turned bloody on Tuesday.

A source who pleaded not to be named said a farmer from Opaha Adoka had gone to clear his farmland for cultivation, but was shocked to find a strange person from Tse Njor who had already cleared the land.

According to the source, "the farmer from Opaha Adoka again went to the farm with some of his people on Monday and discovered that some people, numbering about 15 from Tse Njor, were already there.

"From there, a fight broke out, leading to death of two persons, while several others were injured."

When contacted, the chairman of Otukpo Local Government Area, George Ali, confirmed the clash.

He, however, said that only one person died, while three others were injured.

The council chairman said: "The report we gathered is that a farmer from

this axis [Adoka] went to his farm and discovered that someone had cleared the farmland and he reported the development to the traditional ruler of his area.

"The following day, the farmer went to the place to see who had cleared his farmland and had to go with some people, but when he got there, he met about 15 people there working and a fight broke out.

"What I heard is that one person was killed and the body is at the mortuary now. I later gathered that one person from this axis [Adoka] is missing."

Ali said that himself and the chairman of Gwer West council area, Mrs Grace Iganbon, with traditional rulers from the two communities, had met with the Security Adviser to the Governor, Colonel Paul Hemba, and the Commissioner of Police in the state, Akingbola Olatunji, and had resolved the issue.

When called on phone to get her side of the report, the chairman of Gwer West Local Government, Mrs Iganbon, did not pick her calls.

Meanwhile, the state Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Catherine Anene, confirmed the development.

She added that more policemen had been deployed to the area to forestall further clashes.