

Okuama: Bloodbath returns hours after soldiers pull out

by **Ebenezer Adurokiya** May 9, 2024 in **Metro, Top News** Reading Time: 3 mins read

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Less than 48 hours after soldiers were withdrawn from Okuama community in Ughelli South Local Government Area, bloodbath has returned as one person is feared dead and three others fatally injured.

Our reporter gathered on Thursday morning that the fresh violence ensued as indigenes of the levelled Okuama are attempting to return to their ruined ancestral homes.

Some of the returnees are said to be on a reprisal mission by allegedly attacking those who were said to have strayed into the wasteland to loot what is left of the ruins.

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A former chairman of Akugbene, who pleaded anonymity, explained to journalists on phone what has transpired in the last 48 hours.

“We were surprised to see the soldiers pulled out on Tuesday and some indigenes of Okuama immediately went back to the community.

“We believed some soldiers, who are of Urhobo decent at Okuama, must have passed prior information to them of their plan pull out.

“We have some respite now as we were like in a cage, not moving out to neighbouring communities at the Okuama direction where we go and buy most of our foodstuffs and household materials, particularly at the Okuagbe market.

“But, as I’m talking to you, there is a problem; three indigenes of our community have already been ambushed and attacked with machetes by Okuama returnees.

“They were on their way to Ezebiri community along the footpath linking various communities on hearing that the road is free.

“One of them, who escaped back to our community with machete cuts, narrated that they were attacked by the Okuama returnees at gunpoint while on their way to Ezebiri.

“They attacked them with machetes when he managed to escape, while others were led towards the jetty at the community waterfront.

“The victim is in a critical condition with us right here at the primary healthcare centre,” he claimed.

Our reporters was inundated with gory photos of the machete attacks on the escapees.

An Indigene of another neighbouring community, confirmed the attack to journalists.

He said: “Yes, they (soldiers) pulled out of Okuama Tuesday around 5 to 6 pm. A soldier said that they received a signal from above to leave the community, immediately.

“On the Akugbene and Okuama returnees news, those youths went to Okuama to loot upon hearing that soldiers have left the community.

“Armed youths of Okuama accosted and shot at them and some are said to have been cut with machetes.

“Two of those Akugbene youths escaped to our community unhurt and we’ve already sent them back to their community.”

Another source from Akugbene disclosed that one of the two victims, who escaped back to the community after the attack, is dead.

“As I’m talking to you, one of the two persons who escaped back from the Okuama assault is already dead”, he said.

However, the chairman of Okoloba community, Mr Clement Koki, in his reaction, said that his community would continue to maintain the peace and pray to God for protection.

“It is true that the soldiers have left Okuama. On our part as a community, we will continue to maintain the peace and pray to God Almighty for His protection and support,” he prayed.

Recall that soldiers purportedly on a peace mission were gruesomely killed near Okuama on March 14, 2024, which prompted the military to burn down and lay a siege on the community in retaliation.

The soldiers eventually pulled out of the embattled community, Tuesday, 7th May, 2024, suddenly after 51 days of siege and without any prior information.

Okuama community and Urhobo enclave in Ughelli South Local Government Area and Okoloba community, an Ijaw enclave in Bomadi Local Government Area of Delta State, have been on each other’s throats over a piece of land.

