



Edo police confirm 5 killed, 4 injured during clash between cocoa farmer, produce thieves

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THE Edo State Police Command on Saturday confirmed that five persons were killed and four others injured in the clash between cocoa farmers and some produce thieves in the Gbelemotin community in Ovia South-West Local Government Area of the state.

The clash, which started on Thursday night, escalated on Friday morning as those believed to be sympathetic to the victims of the Thursday night fight mobilised and launched a counter attack on Friday morning

The community witnessed a serious clash between cocoa farmers in the locality and some produce thieves believed to be Izon boys in the locality.

A competent source in the locality who pleaded anonymity, told *Sunday Tribune* that the crisis started on Thursday when an Ikale cocoa farmer hired some vigilantes to guard his farm which has been under poaching by some suspected Izon boys.

The vigilantes were said to have killed four of the Izon boys.

The Friday morning coun-

ter attack, the source added, was carried out by some Izon boys sympathetic to the four allegedly killed by the vigilantes.

"There was fighting yesterday (Friday) in my zone, many are feared killed. A vigilante sponsored by an Ikale man, Igbala, killed four Izon boys two nights ago.

"The boys were allegedly stealing produce belonging to the Yoruba. The boys are from Kolombor (Gbelemotin).

"Yesterday (Friday morning, there was a counter attack and some people were killed and houses burnt. The num-

ber of casualties on the other side is yet not known.

"Soldiers and other security officers were there yesterday. They moved some bodies but there are still many bodies in the bushes.

"The cocoa these boys were stealing belong to the Yoruba farmers in the area, at Madotti Camp. The Yorubas must have suffered some collateral losses." The source volunteered.

When contacted, the Edo State Police Command's Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Moses Yamu, said that five persons were confirmed dead

while four others were injured in the clash.

In a Short Messaging Service (SMS) sent to *Sunday Tribune* on Saturday evening, the PPRO said: "Five persons were confirmed dead while four others were injured in a clash between Gbelemoti community and Maidoti community.

"Joint operation with the Army, vigilantes, and other agencies is ongoing as the situation has been brought under control.

"Investigation into the cause of the clash has commenced." Yamu stated.