

Ebonyi communal clash claims 55 - Nigerian Village Square

Written by NVS /SUN News
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From Goddy Osuji, Abakaliki/SUN News

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• Victims of Ezillo/Ezza communal clash in Ebonyi State

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At least 55 persons, including children, yesterday lost their lives in a renewed communal war in Ezillo in Ishielu local government area of Ebonyi State. Among the dead was a police Divisional Crime Officer (DCO) in charge of the police station in Ezillo.

The war, which started in the early hours of Saturday, forced the governor of the state, Chief Martin Elechi to cancel all his New Year programmes. Those killed included children between the ages of 3 to 5, old men and women as well as over 30 donkeys.

Some of the wounded were rushed to the Federal Medical Centre, Abakaliki, for treatment. The Divisional Crime Officer whose name is yet to be ascertained was said to be on his way to the

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office when he was ambushed and shot dead.

An eyewitness, one Ikechukwu Eze said that the gunmen invaded the community around 5a.m with an unidentified vehicle, divided themselves into groups and first attacked the Ezillo police station along Enugu-Abakaliki expressway while some of them took over the Afor Ezillo market. He said that they were still asleep when the gunmen attacked them explaining that it was when they heard the gunshots that most of them ran out from their homes to take refuge inside bushes only to meet their death in the hands of their killers.

Another eyewitness, Jacob Okoro, disclosed that when they heard sporadic gunshots, they all ran out but the gunmen shot at them killing all the members of his family. "It was the grace of God that I am alive because I can not really say how I escaped. As am talking with you, I have lost everything. Our compound that has about 32 persons, only three persons out of the number escaped the bullets of the gunmen. When we ran out of the house, we saw some young men and we were thinking that they are also running for safety not knowing that they are the gunmen. As you run towards them, they will just kill you immediately," he said.

Sunday Sun observed during a visit to the community that the gunmen also killed donkeys, burnt down the Afor Ezillo market, filling stations and houses. Most of the youths, old men and women including children who lost some members of their families could not hold back tears as they cried uncontrollably.

Confirming the incident, the Ebonyi State Commissioner of Police, Mr. Adeola Adeniyi who led the state governor, Martin Elechi to the place described the incident as regrettable and unfortunate adding that the Inspector General of Police, Mr. Hafiz Ringim has approved the deployment of mobile policemen from Cross River, Rivers and Akwa Ibiom States to assist those in Ebonyi..