

Three beheaded, as Kwara communal clash worsens

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•Curfew imposed

THE boundary disputes between Offa and Erin-Ile communities in Kwara State worsened Friday evening as three people were reportedly beheaded in Offa by rampaging youths.

Youths from the two communities had been at one another's throat since Wednesday.

The state police command on Saturday declared a dusk to dawn curfew on the communities until further notice following the escalation of the conflict.

Although, there was no official confirmation from the police on the latest killings, a highly dependable police source, who pleaded not to be quoted, confirmed the killings to our correspondent on the telephone on Saturday.

He said, "Yes, it is true, the situation is gradually getting

out of hands in the two communities, but we are fully prepared to deal with anybody who violates law and order there."

The latest killings brought the death toll to four in the incident, while no fewer than 10 persons had sustained varying degrees of injury. The wounded are presently in critical condition at the University of Ilorin Teaching Hospital and the General Hospital, Offa.

Property worth millions of naira have been damaged by the youths, who set ablaze houses, markets and mosque.

The conflict has forced all schools, including the Federal Polytechnic Offa on a compulsory holiday.

Details of how the three were killed could not be obtained, but a source in Offa,

who confided in our correspondent, claimed that the police could not save the lives of the three persons because of the chaotic situation in the area.

The source disclosed that the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) was forced to put off its planned rally scheduled for Saturday (yesterday) at Offa.

In a statement on Saturday, the spokesman of the state's police command, Mr. Markus Gideon, a deputy superintendent of police, said the curfew imposed on the communities would be in force between 6.00pm and 6.00am until further notice.

The statement also banned all public rallies and processions in the affected

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the latest news of the state, he said, consisted of other prominent persons who had been saying that he would retire from the country], I took it on

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areas.

The statement said the curfew was part of the fresh measures by the police to restore peace and order in the area.

The police ordered all persons to move out of the area officially designated as a buffer zone by the government.

In another statement on Saturday, the Kwara State Government directed the Commissioner of Police, Alhaji Bukar Maina, to deploy more policemen in the

area in order to restore order.

A detachment of riot policemen had, however, reportedly moved from Ekiti State on Thursday to assist in arresting the violence.

In the statement by the Special Assistant on Media and Communication to the Governor, Mr. Nurudeen Imam-Abdullah, the government called on the chairmen of the two local governments in the areas (Offa and Ogun) to cooperate with the security agents towards re-

storing sanity.

It warned that government would not hesitate to invoke relevant sections of the law to deal with the situation.

The two traditional rulers had also been urged to appeal to their subjects to be peaceful and law abiding, while the state Governor, Dr. Bukola Saraki, has summoned stakeholders from the two local government areas for an important meeting at the Government House.

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