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Nembe violence: Factions yet to reach amicable settlement

By Olamilekan Lartey, Yenagoa

The feuding factions in the Nembe Bassanbiri crisis that resulted in the deaths of four people and the destruction of valuable property in Bayelsa State, failed to reach a resolution on Tuesday.

The state Governor, Chief Timipre Sylva, had summoned the traditional ruler and other stakeholders of the troubled zone to a meeting in Yenagoa, the state capital on Monday, but the closed-door meeting dragged on till Tuesday.

Heavy fighting broke out in Nembe on New Year day and continued for several days.

Sources at the meeting told our correspondent that Sylva only declared open the parley and left, saying he could not preside over the meeting while the Amanayabo of Nembe, King Ralph Iwowari,

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was in attendance.

Sources said the meeting adjourned after the monarch directed all the stakeholders to submit their positions in writing within the next two weeks.

The governor reportedly told the gathering that the frequent outbreak of violence in his home local government area had become a show of shame.

He warned that his administration would not hesitate to take steps to stop the wanton destruction of lives and property in the LG.

Sylva also distanced himself from the crisis in the LG, saying he had no faction and was not in support of any of the violent groups that had unleashed mayhem in the area in their struggle for political power.

He said, "Every person in Nembe knows that I am not involved. Even when they know I cannot be involved. It is a collective shame that is is happening.

"Many nights, I have been woken up because of this problem in my community. If the youths had subjected themselves to traditional authority, there would have been peace.

"Our first responsibility as a government is to secure lives and property of innocent people and that we must do."

The governor said he could not understand the reasons for the senseless fight that had claimed so many lives in the area.

He added that the problem in Nembe might force the government to take drastic steps to ensure peace in the local government.

"The government's job must be done and it may not be palatable for some people."

Present at the meeting were top officials of the administration and prominent indigenes of the troubled council including the the Amanayabo of Twon-Brass, King Diette-Spiff, the Chairman of the Bayelsa State Traditional Council, H.R.M Joshua Igbagara, the Special Adviser to the Governor on Political Matters, Ambassador Otiotio, the Chairman of the Nembe-Bassanbiri Council of Chiefs, Chief Alfred Tamuno, a former LG Chairman, Walter Kroghagha, a woman Leader, Yeri AkRAIN and the Permanent Secretary to the State Government House, Rev. Theophilous Ibaralanyo, Commander Joint Task Force, Bayelsa State, Lt.Col Nkana Efik and a representative of the commissioner of police.

Meanwhile the Caretaker Committee Chairman in Nembe LG, Mrs Esinta Ebomo, has warned that she would not tolerate any acts of violence in the council.

Ebomo said law-abiding citizens wee free to go about their businesses without fear of molestation.

She condemned the outbreak of hostilities and the wanton destruction of property, adding that all security efforts had been put in place to ensure the safety of everyone in the council.

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