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One dies, 17 injured in Delta accident

March 10, 2012 by Emmanuel Addeh

One person was on Friday feared dead and 17 others injured in an accident involving persons who were travelling from Warri to Isoko in Delta State.

The dead and the wounded persons reportedly attended the sitting of the Delta State judiciary panel of inquiry probing the crisis in Uzere, Isoko South Local Government Area.

The 17, who sustained varying degrees of injury and the deceased, identified as Emu Idiyo, were returning home from the sitting when the accident occurred.

The 18-seater bus marked XE 857 MKD (Benue State) conveying the victims was said to have run into a ditch after the driver swerved in a bid to avoid a head-on collision with an oncoming lorry.

The panel is sitting in Government House Annex, Warri, a far distance from Uzere, where the crisis broke out last year after peaceful protests by youths against Anglo Dutch oil major, Shell.

Three persons were shot dead in the incident, while the palace of the Ovie of Uzere was razed in the crisis, which occurred in November last year.

The villagers had been travelling from Uzere to Warri since penultimate Thursday, when the panel headed by Justice Sylvester Ehiwario commenced sitting.

The President-General of the kingdom, Chief Emeakpor Owhe, had earlier pleaded that the venue of the sitting should be relocated for logistic and security reasons.

Before the accident, he had told journalists, "Though we commend the government for setting up the panel, we are asking that the sitting should be relocated to Isoko because of security reasons and because it is difficult to transport our people to this place every time the panel sits."

The embattled monarch of the community, Isaac Udogri, whose palace was burnt by irate youths in spontaneous reaction to the killing of three youths, had left the community, citing threats to his life.

The monarch had, since the beginning of the sitting, declined to attend, even after several complaints from members of the panel.

He claimed that his security was not guaranteed at the venue where hundreds of people from the community had been converging since the sitting started.

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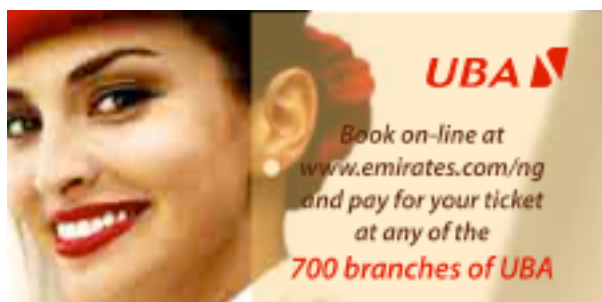
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5