

Ebonyi community conflict

POLITY

RESIDENTS of Oferekpe-Enyigba community, Abakaliki Local Government of Area of Ebonyi State, have narrated gory tales of attacks on them by suspected assailants from neighbouring Enyibichiri-Alike in Ikwo LGA of the state.

The *News Agency of Nigeria* reports that although the community was desolate, assurances from security agencies made some displaced indigenes to return to their homes.

Police authorities confirmed the death of two persons in the conflict in which properties worth millions of naira were destroyed.

Indigenes whose homes were destroyed have relocated from the community while others are squatting with relatives.

One of them, Mr. Chibueze Nwelem, 32, recalled that he saw the assailants numbering about 20 kill his father, Nwelem Ijebe, and his elder brother, Innocent, while they abducted his sister, Odinaka.

"I was returning from the farm when I saw a lot of people inside my compound and when my brother wanted to escape, they shot him in the head.

"I hid and saw them molesting my father whom they later shot as he was shouting for help, and afterwards they abducted my sister," he said.

Another indigene, Celestine Uguru, said that the assailants attacked the five villages of the community around 12 pm on March 19, killing and destroying buildings, farm crops and farmlands.

A member of the community's kingship cabinet, Mr. Sunday Nwideogu, noted that the army personnel stationed in the area informed the natives that the suspects had been released to the government whom they were only answerable to.

The spokesperson for the Ebonyi Police Command, DSP Jude Madu, said that he was not officially aware of the arrest of such suspects but that officers of the command were in control.