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Policeman killed as boundary riot rages in Gombe

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Gbenga Adeniji

A N unidentified policeman has lost his life in a boundary riot between residents of the Billiri and Shongom council areas in Gombe State.

Eyewitnesses said the policeman was killed when hoodlums stormed Billiri and burnt houses in Kufai and Kolkos in the council area.

The deceased was among the security operatives deployed in the two councils to check the crisis.

A source, who spoke to *PUNCH Metro*, said the Billiri and Shongom areas were dominated by Christians.

The source said, "The two communities have been experiencing riots for some years over a boundary dispute. The riots occur every rainy season when farming activities start. This year has not been an exception. Like every other year, when the people of Billiri went to farm on June 23, they were chased by armed men from Shongom."

According to the source, on that day, the armed men from Shongom invaded Kufai, a small village in Billiri not to 0 far from Shongom, and began burning houses.

It was gathered that the residents of the area ran away and the police later came to calm the situation.

A resident of Gombe said the place was tense when the policemen came and in the confusion, one of them was shot in the head by the rioting men and immediately rushed to a hospital for treatment.

"The policeman died on the way to the hospital," the resident added.

Multiples sources said the situation became worse on Tuesday as more houses in Billiri were razed.



"We now live in fear as government is helpless and lawlessness is now the order of the day," said another resident, who spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of attack.

The spokesperson for the Gombe State Police Command, DSP. Mary Malum, said the state command had yet to get any official report on the matter.

Asked if she was aware of the death of a policeman in the clash, she said, "I don't want to comment on that until I get an official report."

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