

Edo community protests youth leader's killing

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Commissioner of Police, Mr Lawan Jimeta

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Community leaders in Ehor, Uhunmwonde Local Government Area of Edo State, on Tuesday, called on the state Commissioner of Police, Mr Lawan Jimeta, to fish out the killers of a youth leader, Mr Osas Ehigiamusoe.

Ehigiamusoe was allegedly killed by suspected Fulani, while he was enforcing the COVID-19 curfew imposed on the state by Governor Godwin Obaseki.

The deceased was said to have accosted some Fulani men, who were lurking suspiciously on the deserted Benin-Auchi Expressway after 7pm on April 23, 2020.

The Enogie of Ehor, Chief David Igiehon, who spoke to journalists on the killing, said it was important to apprehend the perpetrators in order to assuage the loss of the community and the bereaved family.

Igiehon said Ehigiamusoe's death was a great loss to the people of Ehor, because of his role as a bold and courageous youth leader.

Narrating how Ehigiamusoe was murdered, a community leader, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the deceased accosted some strangers suspected to be Fulani, who were lurking suspiciously on the road.

The source stated, "Little did he know that they were armed and out for a kill. One of them pulled out a knife and stabbed him in the stomach and his intestines came out. The herdsmen thereafter ran into the nearby Hausa community.

"When other youths in the town heard about the incident, they stormed the Hausa community to demand that the culprits be brought out.

"The resultant commotion led to the blockage of the Benin-Auchi Expressway by the irate youths."

It was gathered that the CP responded to a distress call for reinforcement by the Divisional Police Officer at the Ehor Police Station by sending personnel from the Ekpoma Division and Benin City to quell the raging protest and clear the road to allow for free flow of traffic.

It was learnt that before Ehigiamusoe's killing, there had been tension in Ehor as a result of the upsurge in kidnapping, robbery and rape in the town and the adjacent communities by hoodlums, who were believed to be using the Hausa community as a hideout.

The source stated, "Of particular concern to the youth are the frequent kidnapping, robbery and rape of women in Ehor and the adjoining villages whenever they are coming to, or going back from the Ehor Central (Umagbai) Market every five days.

“The kidnapping, robbery and rape became rampant in the area as a result of suspected Boko Haram terrorists, who go about as Fulani herdsmen, who were brought into the Hausa community by some sponsors.

“They normally come from the mosque area to attack residents in the evening and at night. From what we gathered through our interaction with the Hausa here, the Fulani among them do not engage in any visible business. They do not graze cattle and there are no cows anywhere near Ehor. They just roam about to kidnap, rob, rape and thereafter return to the Hausa community as their base.

“All the Hausa in the community are traders, who deal in farm produce, operate provision stores and *suya* spots, but the Fulani among them do not do any noticeable business. They always come and go without renting any accommodation. They squat with the Hausa people and mainly take shelter in the mosque and always carry sophisticated guns, cutlasses and knives about.”

The state police command recently paraded one Abdulkadiri, a Fulani, who confessed that the only profitable businesses for him and his cohorts were robbery and kidnapping since cattle rearing was being threatened by rustlers and indigenous farmers who protest against the destruction of their crops by cows.

PUNCH Metro gathered that the hoodlums had been terrorising Uhi, Ugieghudu, Okeh, Irhue, Orua, Ekpan, Uhiele, Owan, Okhuo and Ahor villages along the Benin Bypass.

The Enogie said since the Hausa came to Ehor many years ago, they had been peaceful and live harmoniously with the natives.

He appealed for calm and advised residents to go about their business and allow the police to do their investigation, just as he requested for more police presence in the area to check the rising cases of kidnapping and armed robbery.

The state Police Public Relations Officer, DSP Chidi Nwabuzor, said investigation was ongoing and peace had been restored in Ehor and the neighbouring communities.

“We have restored peace in the community and investigation is ongoing into the murder of the youth leader. We will surely let you know when we complete our investigation,” he told *PUNCH Metro*.