

# 15 killed, houses razed in Cross River communal clashes

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Cross River State Commissioner of Police, Uche Anozia

## Ada Wodu, Calabar

Unofficial figures indicate that at least 15 people have allegedly been killed and a village sacked after fighting broke out on Tuesday between two communities in Cross River State.

Sources said members of Afono and Ibini communities in the Biase Local Government Area of the state clashed over a road both communities had used for many years.

Fighting broke out after youths from Afono allegedly blocked the only road leading to the two communities, thereby preventing their Ibini neighbours from passing.

A resident of Ibini, Martins Ogba, alleged that fighting started when youths from Afono blocked the road and three youths from Ibini dismantled the blockade.

“As they were returning to Ibini, they did not know that Afono youths had laid in ambush, shot and killed two of the Ibini boys, while one escaped to tell the people. That was on Monday. On Tuesday, Ibini youths entered Afono and they fought. Three more people from Ibini were killed while about 10 people from Afono also died, bringing the total number of the dead to 15.

“As I am talking to you now, the Ibini youths have razed down Afono and there is no single soul there now. Even youths from Orugbam who went to support them have fled,” Ogba said.

An indigene of Afono who spoke on condition of anonymity said the problem between his community and Ibini had to do with the clashes between Orugbam and Abanwan in the past.

“The problem between us and Ibini is that since Orugbam were displaced from their ancestral home, Ibini people have been looking for our trouble. Our youths only went to block the road to avoid their problem. But because Ibini are in support of Orugbam, they felt threatened and attacked us. Now, they have succeeded in killing not less than 10 people and burnt down our village,” he said.

It was gathered that Erei land harbours all the four warring communities which have been torn apart following the incessant war between Orugbam and Abanwan.

Reacting to the latest crisis, the state Police Command Public Relations Officer, Irene Ugbo, said, “It is not true. No person was killed. The only thing was that farms and some houses were destroyed. When we heard about the crisis, the Commissioner of Police, Uche Anozia, quickly sent police officers and MOPOL (Mobile policemen) and very soon, the Commissioner of Police and State Security Adviser will visit the place to meet with traditional rulers.”