

Many feared killed, houses razed in Benue communal clash

John Charles 22 July 2021

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The lingering communal crisis in the troubled Bonta and Ukpute areas of Benue State escalated on Monday with several people feared killed and several houses allegedly burnt.

According to sources, some Bonta militias allegedly invaded the Ochoro community and unleashed terror on the residents.

The Ochoro community is in the Konshisha Local Government Area of the state and mainly inhabited by the Igede people.

There has been a lingering land dispute between residents of Bonta and Ukpute in the Konshisha and Oju local government areas of the state, respectively, which culminated in a serious battle in March this year.

The crisis led to the killing of 11 soldiers, who were on a peace mission, on April 1.

Sources from both sides alleged that some Tiv militias attacked the Ochoro community on Tuesday.

“Over 30 women and kids were massacred and several houses razed. Ochoro is a neighbouring community of Bonta and Ukpute,” one of the sources said.

When contacted, the Chairman, Oju Local Government Council, Clement Onaa, said, “The attack yesterday (Tuesday) was not in Oju, but Konshisha, though the Ochoro community consists of Igede people. One thing you must

know is that Oju and Obi people, who are Igede, live in the Gwer East and even the Konshisha LGAs or any other Tiv area.

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“I’m aware of the crisis and called my colleague in the Konshisha LGA to commiserate with him. So, the crisis is not in my council.”

The Chairman of Konshisha Local Government Council, James Ijirgba, said he was aware of the crisis but was waiting to be briefed by the Divisional Police Officer in the area.

“I’m aware of the crisis, but it is still a rumour until I hear from the DPO, who promised to get the details and brief me, but I have not heard from him; you know that the place is far from the local government headquarters,” Ijirgba said.

Efforts to get the reaction of the state police command were not successful as calls to the mobile phone of the Public Relations Officer, DSP Catherine Anene, did not connect.