

*We lost seven indigenes, recovered five corpses, says Modakeke group

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THE Modakeke Progressive Union, the flagship body of indigenes of Modakeke town in Osun State, has demanded an end to incessant killings in the area, saying the community lost seven indigenes to the Friday attack.

Speaking on Saturday on the killing of some farmers along Toro Road, Modakeke, on behalf of the community, the MPU spokesperson, Venerable Debo Babalola, explained that five corpses had been recovered while two other corpses of those killed in the attack had not been recovered from the bush.

Babalola, who decried the incessant killings in the area, said an indigene of the town, who was among those attacked, survived the onslaught and managed to get to town though with a gunshot wound.

He said the survivor was responding to treatment at an undisclosed hospital, adding that the identity of those that carried out the attack was known.

"We learnt they (the assailants) asked all of them to lie on the road and shot them. I led the team that went to the scene to evacuate the corpses. When we got to Iraye Junction, I told others that were with me to take the corpses to the mortuary.

"Shortly after, the Commissioner of Police (Wale Olokode), called me and said we should maintain peace. Few minutes later, one Honourable Wale Adebayo called me and said he got a call from the same farm where the initial bodies were evacuated that two more corpses had been discovered.

"I was trying to arrange for a vehicle that would go back there. The anger by those youths that accompanied the corpses to the morgue made them to foment trouble and tension was aggravated. We lost seven people, but we could only recover five.

"We can't go back to the area to evacuate the last two for fear of an attack. We evacuated the initial five corpses on the spot. One other person that was shot escaped with a gunshot injury. He is receiving treatment in a hospital presently.

"For now, everywhere is calm. There is peace in both communities (Ife/Modakeke) presently. But we plead with the government to find lasting solution to this problem. They should let Ife people stay on their farms, while Modakeke indigenes should also stay on their own farms," Babalola said.

Meanwhile, the Ooni of Ife, Oba Adeyeye Ogunwusi, has described as sheer criminality the killing of the victims and expressed hope that the

perpetrators of the crime would soon be apprehended.

A statement on Saturday by the Director, Media and Public Affairs, Ooni's Palace, Moses Olafare, blamed mischief makers for the attempt to link the killing to the "long-resolved Ife/Modakeke dispute."

The statement said, "It is in the public knowledge that the country, like its counterparts across the world, is being confronted by security challenges, which would soon be a thing of the past with the cooperation of all.

"Attempts to add communal colouration to the crime with an attempt to distract security operatives from unveiling the evil minds behind the devilish act by some mischief makers is already known to security operatives who are on top of the matter.

"While commending the government and security operatives, including the police, Department of State Services, the Nigerian Army, vigilante groups and others, for being responsive to the ugly situation and their immeasurable roles in sustaining the peace being enjoyed in the communities, the Ooni implores all law-abiding persons to carry on with their legitimate activities as perpetrators of acts of criminality are not representing any community and will only be treated as criminals."