

# Two farmers killed in Nasarawa community land dispute

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Map of Nasarawa State

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Two Tiv farmers have been reportedly killed in a recent attack in the Obosidima community over a land dispute in the Keana Local Government Area of Nasarawa State.

*PUNCH Metro* had reported that a crisis broke out around the Nasarawa-Benue border communities housing the indigenous Alago and Tiv farmers in the area, leaving four dead and several others injured.

In a press statement in Lafia, the Nasarawa State capital, on Thursday, the President of the Tiv Youths Organisation in the state, Isaiah Audu, decried the consistent attacks on his kinsmen and called on the state government to urgently intervene in the matter.

He narrated that the recent weeks had seen the Keana LGA on the brink of collapse as a result of unending disagreements between the Tiv and Alago communities which had shattered the tranquillity that once characterised their coexistence.

Audu lamented that at a time when collective efforts were supposed to be channelled on farming to combat the hunger and starvation currently ravaging the country, precious lives of farmers were being lost regularly due to the violence in the area.

He said, “We address the press today with profound sorrow, as we bear witness to the devastating erosion of peace in a community that had long enjoyed harmony.

“You recall that on June 24, 2024, there was an attack at Bakin Kotar, a community at the border between Keana LGA of Nasarawa State and Guma LGA of Benue State. Some Alago persons were said to have been attacked on their farms. Numerous media organisations provided thorough and timely coverage of this reprehensible incident, bringing attention to the severity of the situation.”

He noted that the incident spilled into Keana town and more lives were lost.

He added, “In what was described as a reprisal, innocent law-abiding Tiv persons in Keana were attacked by persons suspected to be Alago. At the last count, at least four persons lost their lives in this attack. The corpses are still at the mortuary to this moment and two of the bodies are yet to be identified.

“That incident was widely condemned by all well-meaning citizens of the state. Security agents were also mobilised to the location to prevent any further degeneration of the situation.

“Predictably, the youth were outraged and infuriated by the unwarranted and unjustified assaults, which sparked a strong reaction from them. On our part as an organisation, we were able to calm the angry nerves of the Tiv people, especially the youths, in the hope that the government, security agencies and traditional institutions would swing into action to apprehend the perpetrators of the dastardly act and bring them to justice.”

He expressed disappointment that, up until the point of addressing the press, their desire for justice had not been met, instead, the situation had worsened with additional attacks on innocent Tiv people who merely wanted to go about their daily lives and businesses without fear of harm or loss.

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“On Tuesday, July 16, 2024, Adaga, a Tiv village, was attacked and lots of valuable properties were destroyed.

“Also, Obosidoma, another Tiv village in Keana, was attacked in the early hours of Saturday, July 20, 2024. Two Tiv persons needlessly lost their lives in this attack with many more valuable properties lost,”

he disclosed.

He, however, called on the Tiv people across the state especially the youths to remain calm despite the undue provocations, adding that the organisation was committed to collaborating with all relevant stakeholders to collectively work towards achieving sustainable and enduring peace in the area.

The youth president therefore, made a passionate appeal to the Nasarawa State Government to, as a matter of urgency, bring to an end to the wanton killing of his kinsmen in Keana LGA of the state.

Meanwhile, the President of the Alago Ikweyi Ggayi Development Union, Mohammed Oshafu, has denied that his kinsmen were behind the violence that recently sparked off in the area.

Speaking with journalists in Lafia on Thursday, the AIGDU President alleged that the Tiv farmers in the area had planned to forcefully take over their ancestral lands across their communities.

He said, “Before the farming season in Keana, the Alago people usually go to clear their farmlands in preparation for the farming season. But this time around, surprisingly, the Tiv farmers emerged from nowhere, stopping and threatening our people and claiming that the Tivs have decided to start farming in the area because it is not part of Nasarawa State.

“Our people suffered several intimidations and molestations throughout this period from the Tiv people, and at various times, forcefully taken to Daudu in Benue State and illegally locked and tortured in local cells, claiming that the land belongs to Benue and not Nasarawa State,” he said.

He, however, appealed to the Nasarawa State Government to make more efforts towards proffering a lasting solution to the unwarranted killings and unending crisis in the area.

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Meanwhile, Governor Abdullahi Sule, who spoke through his Commissioner for Humanitarian, Special Duties, and NGOs, Margaret Elayo, expressed concern over the unfortunate incident during a visit to the Internally Displaced Persons camps in the area.

While promising to investigate the remote causes of the crisis, the governor reaffirmed his administration's commitment to adequately secure the lives and property of the residents across the 13 LGAs of the state.

“The state government is committed to finding the causes of the crisis witnessed in the area,” he replied when asked what the government was doing.