

Enugu to sanction masqueraders for killing two residents

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| Map of Enugu State

The government has launched a full-scale investigation into the activities of Oriokpa masquerade groups, vowing to hold perpetrators accountable.

Early this week, two persons were reported to have died following the excessive activities of Oriokpa masqueraders at University Town of Nsukka in Nsukka local government area of the state which have spread chaos in the suburbs.

Commissioner for Local Government, Rural Development and Chieftaincy Affairs, Chief Okey Ogbodo, confirmed this in a statement made available to journalists in Enugu on Friday, highlighting the government's commitment to maintaining public safety.

Following the development, he announced that the state government has summoned traditional rulers and Presidents-General of the affected communities to address the issue.

According to the statement, affected communities include Nguru, Isiakpu, Echara, Nru, Edem-Ezema, Iheagu, Ihe, Owere, and Umuoyo. These areas Ogbodo said have witnessed pandemonium, bodily harm, and fatalities due to the masqueraders' actions.

He said that Governor Peter Mbah has directed the Commissioner of Police to investigate the incidents and bring those responsible to justice.

The government has also warned that it will not tolerate further excesses from any group or individual, emphasising its commitment to protecting citizens' rights and security.

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The statement partly read: "Consequently, and following the express directive of His Excellency, the Governor of Enugu State, Dr. Peter Mbah, the traditional rulers and Presidents-General of the town unions of the affected communities are hereby invited to meet with the Hon. Commissioner for Local Government, Rural Development and Chieftaincy Affairs, at the State Secretariat on Friday, September 27, 2024. Venue is the Office of the Honourable Commissioner, and time is 1pm prompt.

"The affected communities are Nguru, Isiakpu, Echara, Nru, Edem-Ezema, Iheagu, Ihe, Owere, and Umuoyo.

"Furthermore, the governor has equally directed the Commissioner of Police to immediately institute a full-scale investigation into the incidents, including the reported fatalities resulting from the activities of the said masquerade groups with a view to bringing whoever is culpable to book."

While commiserating with families of those said to have lost their lives in circumstances connected with the activities of the masquerades, the government has also warned that it would not condone any further excesses by any persons or groups.

“Meanwhile, the Enugu State Government frowns at the excesses by whatever any persons or groups. Our people should never be made to live in fear, as the rights and security of our women, children, youth, and indeed every citizen and resident of Enugu State must be guaranteed at all times.

“Consequently, any such excesses by the Oriokpa masqueraders or any group for that matter will be met with the commensurate sanctions by the government,” it read.