

Four killed as two Benue Communities go to war

From **Rose Ejembi,**
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FOUR persons have been confirmed killed with several others injured in a clash between some vigilance group members and hoodlums in Okpoga and Ingle communities of Okpokwu Local Government Area of Benue State.

Daily Sun gathered that trouble started when some hoodlums attacked and killed a member of the vigilance group. The hoodlums, also attacked and shot another vigilance member at Okpoga.

Sources from the area said the development did not go down well with the Okpoga youths as they immediately went after those behind the dastardly act, caught, and burnt two of

them.

It was further gathered that because the vigilance member that was killed was from Ingle, the people of the community were angered about the incident and went on reprisal attack on Sunday. They caught a commercial motorcyclist who took a passenger from Okpoga to Ingle, and burnt him with his motorcycle.

"The commercial motorcyclist was attacked, killed and burnt by angry youths in Ingle. He was identified to have come from Okpoga. That was why they killed him in retaliation," a source who declined to be identified said.

The development was said to have sparked off tension in the area as some

members of the community started fleeing to neighbouring communities for safety.

When contacted, the state Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), ASP Moses Yamu, while confirming the report said the state police command immediately waded into the matter and moved in with six patrol teams to douse the tension and restore normalcy to the area.

Meanwhile, the Idoma socio-cultural group known as Opiatoha K'Idoma has condemned the spate of killings going on in Okpokwu even as it expressed worry that the once peaceful area was gradually being turned to a theatre of war by some unscrupulous elements.

In a statement jointly signed by its President and Secretary General, Chief Baba Odangla and Chief Adoka Adaji, the Opiatoha K'Idoma urged security agencies to rise up to the occasion and fish out the masterminds of the mayhem as a matter of urgency,

"There must be a stop to this anti -Idoma behaviour, hence, the culprits should not be provided shelter by any group. We admonish our communities to live in peace with one another and eschew bitterness. The carnage in Agatu is still fresh in our minds to witness any form of violence in any part of Idoma land. We should be our brother's keepers at all times." to ing."