

SHARES VIEWS

Joe Effiong, Uyo

Several persons, including a policeman on duty, were killed on Wednesday by hoodlums along the Oku Iboku – Odukpani axis of the currently deplorable Calaba-Itu Road.

Daily Sun learnt that the gunmen suspected to come from Ikot Offiong in Odukpani Local Government Area of Cross River State who have been terrorizing the area on account of perennial communal clash between Ikot Offiong in Odukpani LGA of Cross River State and Oku Iboku in Itu LGA of Akwa Ibom State.

Daily Sun was told that communal clash between the two communities has claimed hundreds of lives and properties worth millions of Naira have been destroyed since the days of Eastern Regional government.

The current clash is said to have be re-enacted on Wednesday evening when gunmen blocked the federal highway and unleashed mayhem on passengers commuting between Cross River and Akwa Ibom states

The chairman of Itu Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State, Mr Etetim Onuk, in a statement made available to Daily Sun said: “We are deeply saddened by the news of an unfortunate overnight attack along the Oku Iboku/Odukpani axis of the Calabar-Itu highway by gunmen suspected to come from Ikot Offiong.

“Reportedly, lives have been lost – including that of an on-duty policeman, while some other persons sustained various degrees of injuries.

“As a result, the social media space has been awash with alarming and, in some cases, false and misleading stories of a sustained clash between the boundary communities of Oku Iboku, Itu Local Government Area and their counterpart in Odukpani, Cross River State.

“It is, therefore, pertinent to set the records straight in order to avoid panic and unnecessary tension. While I condole with the families of the deceased persons, I make bold to say that the area is now safe. I, therefore, urge every citizen of Itu Local Government Area, as well as commuters plying Calabar-Itu highway to go about their normal business as the situation had been brought under control by security agents.”

The Akwa Ibom State Police Command could not, however, confirm or refute the claim on casualties as given by the chairman of Itu local government area.

The police public relations officer in the state, Mr Odiko MacDon, in an online media statement said: “Within Akwa Ibom State, there was no attack except across the river and the best person to contact for update is PPRO Cross River State.

“However, Akwa Ibom Police Command has acted proactively by deploying its personnel strategically to prevent any breakdown of law and order. While we call for security vigilance at all times, members of the public should please go about their lawful duties,” the statement said.