

1 killed as communities clash in Edo

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Tony Osauzo, Benin

One person has allegedly died in a clash between two communities in Delta and Edo states. Consequently, the police in Edo State vowed to ensure that the peace agreement signed by the Enogie (Duke) of Ologbo, Owenubugie Akenzua and the leader of the Itsekiri people, the Iyatsere of Warri, Chief Johnson Atseleghe, is enforced. The Commissioner of Police, Lawan Jimeta, said yesterday that arrests have been made in connection with the clash.

“We have made some arrests, we have called the leaders of the two people and they have signed a peace agreement. You know communal clashes are not always easy but we are on top of the situation,” he said.

It was gathered that development levy ought to be paid by land developers led to disagreement between the Benin and Itsekiri, which degenerated into bloody clash that left one person dead and some property destroyed. Following the clash, several persons allegedly deserted the community for fear of attacks, even as soldiers were drafted to keep peace in there.

One of the traditional leaders, Atseleghe, accused the other of fuelling the crisis by harbouring suspected cultists in his palace. He said that the way out of the crisis was to evacuate the suspected cultists from his palace.

“One of the boys they shot is a big shot in Eiye Confraternity. It now escalated to a cult war. A lot of people are now in the hospital. The police have intervened. We signed a peace accord. The Commissioner of Police told us to address our people. I came but he did not come.

“After the peace accord, we came and got report that they have destroyed some Itsekiri houses in town. They burnt their property,” Atseleghe said.

But in his reaction, Akenzua told journalists yesterday: “I don’t know of any cultist in the palace, people that come to the palace are indigenes of Ologbo community and the palace is a public place open to all. “However, you are not allowed to come to the palace and misbehave. I don’t harbour cultist and I am not aware of cultists coming to the palace.

“The way forward is for Atseleghe to recognize that he is staying in Benin land because he goes about saying that he is head of all Itsekiri in Benin land. They stay in Benin land but they are from Delta State. So, they must subject themselves to the administration of Enogie, who is representing the Oba of Benin.”