

Bloody Sunday as scores killed across states

From **Chijioke Agwu**, Abakaliki, **John Adams**, Minna, **Sylvanus Viashima**, Jalingo, **Rose Ejembi**, Makurdi, **Geoffrey Anyanwu**, **Jude Chinedu**, Enugu and **Seye Ojo**, Ibadan

It was a bloody Sunday as many people lost their lives in four states of the federation.

The incidents were recorded first in Ebonyi State, where no fewer than seven persons were killed in Effium community of Ohaukwu Local Government Area.

Following the killings, Governor Dave Umahi, declared a curfew in the community.

Daily Sun gathered that the killings took place on Saturday when rival members of the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) clashed at Effium Motor Park, which snowballed into intra-communal clashes between Ezza indigenes and the Effium community.

Sources in the community told Daily Sun that Ezza indigenes in Effium and their Effium counterparts had been embroiled in a battle of supremacy in the park.

It was further gathered that the crisis started when the Ezza faction of the NURTW disagreed with the Effium faction over the sharing formula for the revenues generated at the park.

More than 70 buildings, cars and other property worth millions of naira were reportedly destroyed in the melee as the clash escalated in the community.

The anxiety, pandemonium and violence that trailed the clash have forced many residents of the area to flee the community.

The Ebonyi State government, in reaction, banned the activities of NURTW at the park and summoned stakeholders of the community to an emergency security meeting at the Old Government House in Abakaliki on Sunday morning.

At the end of the meeting, which was presided over by the deputy governor, Kelechi Igwe, at least 30 stakeholders of the community were ar-

rested and taken to the Ebonyi State Police Command office for interrogation over their roles in the crisis, if any.

Some of the stakeholders arrested were the chairman of Ohaukwu LGA, Clement Odah; the lawmaker representing Ohaukwu North Constituency, Chinedu Awo; coordinator of Effium Development Centre, Sunday Agbo; and his Effium South counterpart, Eucharia Ogwale.

Others included Special Assistant to the Governor on Vegetable Markets, Emmanuel Uzor, and his Parks Development counterpart, Emmanuel Igwe.

Meanwhile, Governor Umahi on Sunday imposed a curfew on the community as part of measures to restore peace.

Similarly, Sunday, bandits, numbering over 200, in the morning, invaded some communities in Munya and Paikoro LGAs of Niger State, killing two vigilante group members.

The bandits also killed a middle-age man and injured about 15 others in an attack that the villagers said was targeted only at foodstuff warehouses and shops.

At least 15 women were also abducted and forced to help the bandits carry the looted foodstuff from the communities.

The bandits, however, promised to release the women after their task of carrying the foodstuff to a particular location.

The communities included Beni, Old and New Dalolo, Aboloso, Ishau and Amale, all in Paikoro LGA, while Gwari Nyayi, Kabiri and Biri in Munya LGA were also raided.

According to the district head of Beni, Alhaji Jafaru Umar Sarki, who confirmed the attack, the gunmen, numbering about 200, came on Saturday on over 50 motorcycles in three different groups.

The Saturday operation only lasted for one hour and the bandits went away with sacks of foodstuff and other items looted from shops in the town.

He said on Sunday morning, the bandits returned, again in three groups, moving from one community to another targeting only foodstuff

and provision shops in an operation that, from 9am, and lasted for over three hours.

According to him, for three hours, while the Sunday attack lasted, a helicopter owned by one of the security agencies, hovered over the communities.

"We saw a helicopter moving round the communities for about six times when the bandits were operating but the helicopter did not attack the bandits," he said.

Yet on Sunday, gunmen abducted the chairman of Ardo-Kola LGA of Taraba State, Mr. Salihu Dovo, killed him and dumped his corpse in the bush.

Taraba State, Police Public Relations Officer, DSP David Misal, who confirmed the killing to Daily Sun in a telephone interview, said the killers stormed Dovo's residence in Sabon Gari area of the state around 1am and took him away. They later called his family people to go look for his body in the bush.

Misal who said a search found the corpse, however, could not confirm if it was an assassination or a kidnapping gone bad.

Daily Sun also gathered that, on Sunday, two suspected armed robbers who allegedly attempted to snatch a motorcycle from their owners were burnt to death by a mob in two separate incidents in Makurdi, the Benue State capital.

Reports said, while one of the incidents happened in front of LGEA Primary School, popularly known as 'Suswam Thank You,' in Wurukum, the other suspect was lynched in the neighbouring Gyado Villa when he attempted to dispossess a commercial motorcyclist of his bike.

In the South-East, communal crisis ravaging Oruku community in Nkanu East Local Government of Enugu, on Sunday, took a devastating turn and residents fled their homes to avoid attacks by armed thugs.

This was coming barely 27 days after the traditional ruler of the community, Emmanuel Mba, was shot dead by policemen allegedly invited from Abuja by some members of the

community while he was conducting a meeting in on December 26, 2020.

His murder led to crisis that turned violent and resulted in the burning of many houses.

Governor Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi immediately set up a judicial commission of inquiry on the matter. But at the weekend thugs who were said to have shot at random to disperse the villagers went ahead to burn over 35 houses belonging to some notable individuals in the community.

Witnesses and victims who identified some of the thugs as members of the community told newsmen yesterday that some of the persons whose houses were attacked were those who canvassed for peace between Oruku and Umuode communities.

Meanwhile, the new Commissioner of Police in the state, Mr. Mohammed Aliyu, has vowed to deal decisively with anyone found to be causing violence.

Aliyu who yesterday led a team of officers on a fact-finding visit to the area and to inspect the level of carnage, expressed dismay at the destruction in the community and pledged that the immediate and remote causes of the violence would be treated to ensure that there would be no reoccurrence.

He said, "It is an unfortunate situation because from information I gathered, it has been an existing issue, which has been on the ground. I took over about three days ago and when I tried to find out what was happening, I discovered that all my officers were not aware. They were not aware because there was no report at the early hour."

A popular Ibadan socialite, Teslim Ajao, was on Saturday evening killed in the NTC area, Iyaganku, Ibadan, Oyo State.

The deceased, fondly called Gatuso, reportedly got to the hotel premises just as the gunmen, who had robbed the hotel, were leaving.

As gathered, he was making a call as he entered the hotel's premises. The gunmen, according to sources, shot him in the stomach at close range, probably thinking that he was calling security agents.