

# Brothers at war

## •2 killed, houses, crops burnt in Benue communities

From **Rose Ejembi**, Makurdi

**LOST** in thought, Abraham Aondo kept soliloquizing while trying to board a commercial motorcycle from Makurdi town to his place of work in Abiem, a border community between Makurdi and Gwer East local government areas of Benue State.

The thoughts that preoccupied his mind included where to keep his aged parents, who had been displaced after their four-bedroom apartment was razed during the recent renewed crisis between Mbaivur/Mbasombo in Gwer East LGA of the state.

Aondo, a staff of Radio Nigeria (Harvest FM) and a native of Mbakume in Mbaivur Council Ward of Gwer East LGA, had been twice a victim of the lingering communal clashes in the area. In the latest crisis, Aondo's septuagenarian father, Pa Stephen Iorchir Aondo-Nyamsar, and his 62-year-old mother, Mama Justina Hembanzan Iorchir, were made displaced people in their own land.

He recalled that, in June 2020, when the crisis first broke out, his new three-bedroom apartment in Ikpayongo was vandalized, which made him to vacate the house and relocate to Makurdi, where he lives in a rented apartment with his family till date.

And now, his parents' house at Tse-Mede in Mbakume ward has been burnt down, with all their property, including foodstuff, electronics, clothes and farm inputs, among other things.

Aondo is just one of the over 5,000 victims of the lingering crisis between the two warring communities of Gwer East LGA, which, according to sources, started between Tse-Nor



• **Pa Iorchir's burnt house.** Inset: The house before it was burnt down

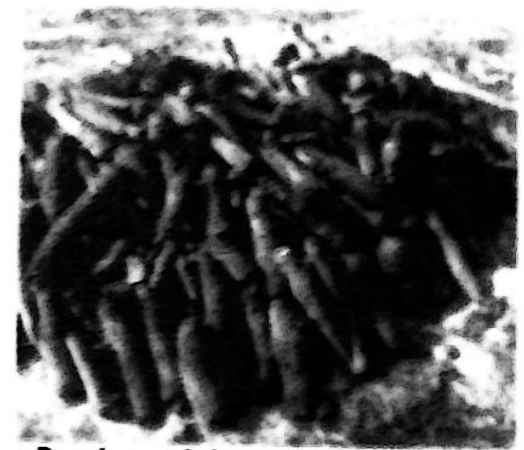
in Mbakume, Mbaivur, and Mbakough in Mbasombo but has lately spread to other villages within the two council wards.

It was gathered that the recent crisis occurred penultimate Monday when a house belonging to a retired Deputy Superintendent of Police, the late Emmanuel Agber, a native of Mbasombo, was reportedly burnt down by unknown people, which angered his people, who, suspecting that the Mbaivur people may have perpetrated the act, went for revenge, identifying and burning houses belonging to Mbaivur people in the area.

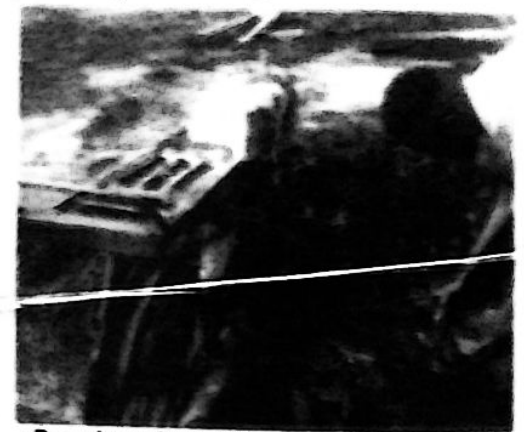
Aondo said one of his relatives who was on his way to the Ikpayongo market early in the morning became the first casualty when he ran into the angry mob and was lynched.

He said: "On that fateful day, Thursday, February 24, the renewed crisis claimed the life of my elder brother, Mr. Ignatius Akombo, who was coming from Mbakume, his village, going to Ikpayongo Market."

He ran into the scene of where the four bedroom apartment was freshly set ablaze at about 6am and the Mbasombo people believed it might have been carried out by some



• **Burnt yam tubers**



• **Burnt motorcycle**

persons from Mbakume.

"He was killed on the spot, while his assailants proceeded into Mbakume village, which is more than 10 kilometres from the late police