

2 killed, policeman injured in renewed Ebonyi communal crisis

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From **Magnus Eze**, Enugu

At least two people were killed in a renewed land dispute which erupted between the people of Abaomege and Ishinkwo communities in Onicha Local Government Area of Ebonyi State, yesterday.

Community sources said the two deceased were returning from a fishing expedition when they were shot dead by the communal warlords.

One of the sources said the situation has created an atmosphere of panic amongst natives and residents of the two communities. Daily Sun gathered that the ever-busy Abaomege town with its booming economic activities was deserted yesterday morning as people shut their shops.

The commercial motorcycle operators' department at Abaomege was also desolate yesterday, just as motorists avoided the Itigidi-Abaomege-Okposi axis of the F113 highway.

“My brother, what we saw here in the morning today (Tuesday) was unexpected, even though the land dispute between Abaomege and Ishinkwo communities has been there.

“Two people were killed by the communal warriors this morning, and a policeman was also shot, but I learnt he didn’t die. It’s terrible here.

“People are running helter-skelter here with shops in the popular Abaomege axis shut down since morning. There is fear everywhere and the villages are in a panicky situation,” he said.

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The Ebonyi State Police Command confirmed the incident.

Its Public Relations Officer, SP Onome Onovwakpoyeya, said the two victims were confirmed dead on getting to the hospital, while the affected policeman was receiving treatment in an undisclosed medical facility in the state.

The police spokesperson said: “Three people, including a police officer, who was returning home after the close of work, were shot at the Abaomege-Ishinkwo communal crisis area by the Ishinkwo warriors.

“The victims were rushed to the hospital. Two of the victims (civilians) were confirmed dead, but the policeman is responding to treatment.

“Intensive manhunt is on for the fleeing suspects.”

The intractable land dispute between the two communities had claimed several lives with property destroyed over the years.

The Director, Legal Services, Ishinkwo Autonomous Community, Mr Innocent Elum, in 2022, revealed the communal crisis dated back to as far back as 1902.

The last crisis that ensued between the two communities claimed no fewer than seven lives in 2022.