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METRO AND CRIME

## 50 killed, houses razed in fresh communal war in A'Ibom

April 30, 2017 Tony Anichebe

At least 50 people were killed and several houses burnt over the weekend in at Uruan a riverine community of Akwa-Ibom State, leading to tears and sorrow for inhabitants of the area. Sunday Telegraph learnt that the invading gunmen, who descended on the unsuspecting riverine villages, actually came from Odukpani in Cross River State.

The transition chairman of Uruan Local Government, Mr. Edwin Okon, who visited the affected communities, said that several properties including houses, farm crops and shops were razed by the gunmen.

"The invaders stole several fishing items including outboard engine, fishing boats and canoes," Okon said, explaining that many of the displaced people were still missing while others were taking refuge in bushes and neighbouring community of Ifiayang in Uruan.

He added: "I have reported the tragedy to the Deputy Governor, Pa. Moses Ekpo, who had swung into action to see how several displaced persons presently squatting at the council secretariat at Idu Uruan will be given some palliatives to save from dying of hunger and starvation."

According to the counsel boss, the displaced people have lost their sources of livelihood to the criminals and needed urgent care and attention.

"As I am talking to you, several people are still missing while about eight people who are critically injured are presently receiving treatment," he said.

Mr. Okon blamed the absence of marine police patrol along the shores of the riverine areas of the state as one of the reasons hoodlums operate freely in the communities.

Last week, about 15 persons were killed and several others injured when some armed men from Ikot Offiong Cross River invaded Oku Iboku community in Akwa Ibom. Oku Iboku in Itu and Uruan council areas, Akwa- Ibom, shares the same shore line with neighbouring communities in Cross River State.

When Sunday Telegraph visited Idu Uruan council headquarters where some of the survivors of the current attack are presently squatting, a victim, Mr. Okon Edet, said he narrowly escaped death but lost his entire household to the invaders.

Edeth, a farmer and fisherman who is in his late sixties wept uncontrollably, as he appealed to Government to come to their aid. "How will I start all over again to bear children," he wailed. The council boss equally pleaded with government at all levels and public spirited individuals to come to their aid stressing that the magnitude of the crisis is beyond the capacity of the council financially to bear alone.

When contacted the Police Public Relation Officer, Akwa Ibom State command, DSP Ikechukwu Chukwu, confirmed the incident; and that his men are now patrolling the affected areas of the state.

According to the police spokesman, the situation has been brought under control while investigation to unravel the immediate and remote causes of the crisis. He, however, disagreed that the number of dead are 50 as submitted by the council boss.

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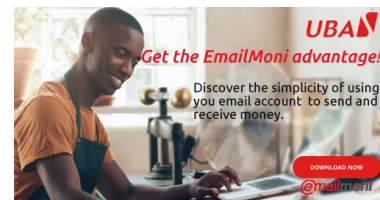
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