

Warlords kill seven farmers in Ebonyi



Published 8 hours ago on October 18, 2018

By **Uchenna Inya ABAKALIKI**



Armed men believed to be warlords yesterday invaded farmlands in three communities at Ngbo in Ohaukwu Local Government Area of Ebonyi State and killed seven farmers.

The warlords believed to be from Agila, Benue State, invaded Ekwashi, Umuogudu Akpu and Ukwuagba communities, injured many others and also destroyed many farmlands.

At Umuogudu Akpu, the warlords had killed a couple, Mr. Joseph Omah and his wife, Angelina, in their farm on June 29.

The people of Ngbo and Agila have been at war since 1922 over boundary matters with many lives lost and property worth billions of naira destroyed.

Yesterday, there were fresh killings at Ngbo community. Over 5,000 persons have been displaced in the invasion.

Worried by the killings, the state Deputy Governor, Dr. Kelechi Igwe, visited the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and urged them to remain calm.

The Chairman of Ohaukwu Local Government Area, Hon. Clement Odah, told Igwe during the visit that he had done all he could to prevent the killings but to no avail.

Odah said he had hosted several security meetings with Benue stakeholders to bring the killings to an end and called on the state government to intervene in the matter.

He said: "We lost over five lives in our communities and farms destroyed. Our means of livelihood was destroyed and it is very unfortunate because a lot of efforts have been put in place to end this crisis.

"The government of Ebonyi State has demonstrated uncommon commitment and seriousness. We have made much more efforts than every other government in the state.

"In 2015 and 2016 a lot of energy was invested. We went to Abuja which our Deputy Governor led personally and we had an agreement that peace will reign between these two communities.

“Unfortunately, as usual, we were attacked again. The Agila people have always been the ones to violate our agreement; our people are peace-loving people. We have taken all the risks possible, we have met in Abuja, we have met with the National Boundary Commission, we have met in Enugu, we met with the Chairman of Abi Local Government on September 25 last year at Nike Lake Resort and our agreement was that the two communities will cease fire.”

The Coordinator of Ngbo North Development Centre, Sunday Igboke, gave insight into the killings.

He said: “Ekwachi and Ukwuagba are under my Development Centre and in Ekwashi; they killed two persons – Alieze Egah and another male.

“Two persons got serious injuries that we don’t know their conditions. We even need the government assistance to know if we can save the lives of those people that are now in the hospital helpless. The villagers have tried what they could to raise money but it is going nowhere.

“Those that are injured are in FETHA 2 Abakaliki. In Ukwuagba, three persons were killed; two women and one man and there are other people that were also shot and wounded. In Umuogudu Akpu, another person was shot in the leg and he is also in the hospital

“These victims were in their farms and they did not go to any other place. Some of these women went to the farms to harvest their cassava and all the rest of them. Each time we are in our farms, these people will be attacking us and if we stop going to our farms, it means we will die of hunger and there is no how we will leave our farms.”

On his part, a stakeholder of the community, Chief Cyril Obazi, explained that the war started raging in 1985 and that since then, many lives had been lost.”

He said: “This problem was 1922 problem. We have been living peacefully with the Agila people but strange enough they decided to be attacking our people, killing, maiming our people.”

Meanwhile, Governor Dave Umahi has expressed shock over the killing of five Ngbo indigenes in Ohaukwu Local Government.

The governor, who was represented by Igwe, made his feelings known when he visited families of the affected persons at Ekwashi and Ukwagba communities.

The governor was in company of security chieives, including the Commissioner of Police, Musa Kimo, and representative of the Cantonment Commander, Major S. Milla.

The Chairman of Ohaukwu Local Government, Odah announced that Umahi, Senator David Mark, Senator Sam Egwu and other relevant stakeholders of the two warring communities would meet at the end of this month over the killings.