

Reprisal claims five in C'River communal clash



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Don't take laws into your hands, Buhari tells communities

Five people from Orugbam in Cross River State were killed yesterday during attack on Abanwan community over a disagreement. Orugbam had lost three people to the invasion of Abanwan on Monday and had allegedly gone to another community, Ekoli to mobilise and attempt to invade Abanwan yesterday morning only to meet a brick wall and ended up losing five more people. At press time, a source close the two communities said Abanwan had started burning down houses at Orugbam.

“As I speak with you, the Abanwan people are burning our village. We are on the run and only God knows when this will stop,” a

resident of Orugbam said.

On how the crisis started, the source, said: "To be honest, a woman died in Abanwan and was to be buried last Saturday. About six youths from Abanwan went to various neighbouring communities to paste her posters as the tradition in the area as a way of advertising the burial. "They went to Ibini and pasted the posters but when they came to Orugbam, some people accosted them and in fact, waylaid them. The Abanwan people decided to bury the woman on Saturday only to attack us on Monday.

To be honest, I don't like what our people are doing because we are all one and we speak the same dialect." A woman, who gave her name as Margaret, said: "Right now, only churches are left in Orugbam. We have always known that this situation will come to this point because Orugbam has always caused problem among the Erei community.

"Orugbam had invaded Ebor and Ipene in the past, killing people. So, Orugbam's action is that they have come to the limit of patience.

"What may have irked Abanwan people is the fact that as a way of reprisal, Orugbam went to a nearby community and recruited some people and gave them military uniforms.

So when the people went to Abanwan and discovered that youths there were waiting for them, they ran away, leaving some Orugbam

youths behind. Five of the youth were killed today (yesterday).” But the state Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), DSP Irene Ugbo, maintained that no death had been reported.

“But some people have been seriously injured,” she said. Meanwhile, President Muhammadu Buhari has urged communities involved in the crisis to allow law and order to prevail in the state.

The admonition is contained in a statement by the Senior Special Assistant on Media and Publicity to the President, Garba Shehu. The President expressed concern over reports of violence in four communities in Biase Local Government Area of Cross River State resulting in loss of lives, injuries and displacement of villagers. Buhari called for calm and restoration of peace in the affected communities bordering Abia State. He said: “Our communities must be ready to live together in peace since no development can take place in an atmosphere of recurring violence.”