

Three killed, houses burnt in Jukun, Tiv clash



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By



At least three Tiv people were killed as the Jukun militia at Kente in Wukari Local Government Area of Taraba State launched attack on Atsenga village in Ukum Local Government Area of Benue State.

In the attack, which started on Monday evening and ended yesterday morning, the invaders burnt several houses and destroyed other property worth millions naira. A 90-year-old woman, Mama Yanenge Shiva, was burnt inside her house.

One of the victims of the attack, Semban Kerepe, said trouble started when a Tiv man had a disagreement with his Jukun friend which resulted to a fight between the two of them.

According to Kerepe, when he couldn't challenge his friend physically, the Jukun went back and mobilised his Jukun militia who came well-armed and started burning down house and food items. Kerepe said following this, the crisis degenerated into a full grown crisis.

Communities as Gbeji, Kente, Igbonum and Vaase are situated along the border of Benue and Taraba states with Jukun and Tiv living together as good neighbours for over 10 decades. Witnesses said the Jukun militia attacked the Tiv communities and destroyed hundred of houses, including a hospital.

According to reports, more than 20,000 tubers of yam and yam seedlings were burnt. The Chairman of Ukum Local Government Area, Hon. Ibellogo Tor-Tyokyaa, confirmed the incident. Tor-Tyokaa said he visited the affected areas to assess the level of destruction.

According to him, he also called his Wukari-counterpart, Hon. Grace Adi, and they met at the scene of the incident and were taken aback. The chairman said that even in their presence, Jukun youths were still firing sporadically and destroying property of the Tiv people. Tor-Tyokaa said efforts to calm them and take the path of dialogue to douse the tension failed.

He said: "Right in our presence, youths were still shooting. At this juncture, we have to run for our lives. "I therefore call on the two commissioners of police in Benue and Taraba states to draft their men to restore peace and order without delay."

At press time, it was learnt that the attackers were still shooting and heading to Igbonum, another Tiv community, on the same border.