

Ebonyi/Benue crisis: Four peace committee members beheaded

...Umahi orders police, DSS to arrest LG chair, 39 others

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ABAKALIKI

Warlords yesterday beheaded four members of peace committee set up to end the age-long boundary dispute between the people of Ngbo, Ohaukwu Local Government Area of Ebonyi State and their neighbours at Agila in Ardo Local Government Area of Benue State.

The committee was set up by the government of the two states.

But the crisis has claimed many lives and property worth billions of naira.

Last week, Benue State Deputy Governor, Chief Benson Abonu, and his Ebonyi State counterpart, Dr. Kelechi Igwe, held a meeting at the Government House, Abakaliki. The meeting inaugurated three committees - Inter-community Peace Committee, Ohaukwu/Ardo Inter Local Governments Peace Committee and a Technical Committee with



Ebonyi Gov, Umahi

members drawn from National Boundary Commission, Office of Surveyor General of the Federation and Surveyors Generals of Ebonyi and Benue states - to end killings, maiming and destruction in the crisis.

But yesterday, four members of the peace committees who are indigenes of Ngbo, Ohaukwu Local Government Area of Ebonyi State, were beheaded while two others were

injured. They were ambushed and killed by warlords on their way to a meeting in Benue State over the crisis.

Governor Dave Umahi, who was visibly angry, summoned a stakeholders' meeting.

Briefing the governor at Exco Chambers, Government House, Abakaliki, where the meeting was held, the local government chairman, Hon. Clement Odah,



Benue Gov, Ortom

said the killings occurred barely one week after the Deputy Governor of Benue State and his contingent including Chairman of Ardo Local Government visited Ebonyi State and inaugurated three committees to find a lasting solution to the killings.

He said: "Each time we meet and agreed that peace should reign, the Agila people will always breach that peace. This one is one of the cases of

breaches and the effect is that it has left in our place, large number of IDPs."

Expressing his anger over the killings, Umahi said it was not ordinary and accused the stakeholders of aiding and abetting the crisis.

He said: "I am not a fool; these things are done by you people. There is no any other person that did it; it is like you give somebody salt, you give him water. How can you say that these people killed were ambushed? I have asked them to audit all your resources that is from Ohaukwu Local Government."

Umahi ordered police and the Department of State Services (DSS) to arrest stakeholders from the area, including the local government chairman, Odah, and interrogate them over the crisis.

He added that those arrested must be going to the police and DSS everyday over the matter after their bail.

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