

# Three killed in Benue communal clash, others missing



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At least, three persons were killed while many others were missing following a renewed communal clash between the people of Okpoga and Edumoga districts of Okpokwu Local Government Area of Benue State.

The Ollo community in Edumoga district and parts of Okpoga district have been embroiled in an intractable communal strife which has claimed many lives over the years.

Some residents told journalists that the Okpoga people attacked Ollo village but were overpowered by the Ollo people, which led to the death of three members of the Okpoga community.

But a resident of Okpoga, who pleaded anonymity, said the Ollo people attacked Okpoga community last Monday night.

According to him, three people were killed in the attack while many others sustained different degrees of injury.

Reports said dozens of others were also declared missing.

However, the Okpoga people have denied attacking Ollo as they claimed that it was Ollo that attacked Okpoga in retaliation of one Ollo man that was killed a fortnight ago at Aidogodo in Okpoga by suspected rival cult group.

At press time, there was still tension in both communities as many residents have fled to neighbouring communities to take refuge pending when normalcy would return to the communities.

The Chairperson of the local government, Mrs. Amina Audu, confirmed the attack and killing.

Audu said two people were killed, adding that the attackers from the warring sides looted property, including livestock left behind by the displaced people.

She said: "Since I was sworn in about two weeks ago. The crisis has continued unabated between the Ollo and Okpoga people of Okpokwu Local Government Area.

"I was told that there was heavy shooting in Okpokwu to the extent that one motorcycle was burnt and I later got a report that the Okpoga boys moved to Ollo to retaliate and one person nicknamed 'Medicine,' was killed."

Audu said she had held several meetings with security agencies and traditional rulers to find ways of ending the age-long crisis.

She said those arrested in connection with the crisis were being detained at the Ogbokolo Police Station, while bodies of the victims were deposited at the morgue at Ogbokolo.

Audu appealed to the youth to be calm and report any further breakdown of law and order to the security agencies for necessary action.