

Three shot in C'River communal crisis

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May 15, 2020 Clement James



At least three people were shot on Tuesday night as people of Orugbam reportedly invaded Ipene and Egbor villages in Biase Local Government Area of Cross River State.

Orugbam, a community bordering Abanwan, Ipene and Egbor had, two years ago, been driven out of their land by Abanwan and they had since taken refuge at Ekoli in Ebonyi State.

But on Tuesday night, Orugbam people reportedly mobilised from Ekoli in Ebonyi State and attacked Ipene and Egbor, shooting a young man in Ipene and two others in Egbor before they were repelled.

A 50-year-old woman, who gave her name as Margaret, said all the women in Ipene and Egbor communities fled after the invasion, with some taking refuge at Unwana in Ebonyi State.

She said: "As I speak with you now, there is no woman in Ipene and Egbor because Orugbam people came from Ekoli and attacked our communities. They say since they are not in their ancestral land, they will not allow us to stay in our own land. They are afraid of going to attack Abanwan because that is a big community and our communities are small."

Earlier, the Deputy Governor, Prof. Ivora Esu, had gone to Ekoli and pleaded with the Orugbam people to return home, promising to secure their land.

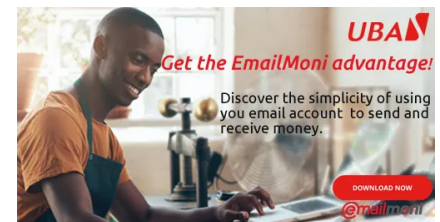
As at the time of writing this report, the whereabouts of those wounded were unknown, but a source said they were taken to a place where the bullets could be removed.

A man, who gave his name as Umoso, blamed the deputy governor for insisting that Orugbam should return to their land "without taking cognizance of the fact that they are

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trouble makers and that they should swear an oath not to cause trouble in Erei land before they could be allowed to return”.

The Permanent Secretary, office of the State Security Service, Sir Alfred Mboto, confirmed that three people were shot.

Mboto, however, said that a team of Mobile Policemen had been dispatched to the area.

He said: “I just came back this morning and I was told that three people have been shot. You know the problem in that area is intractable but a Mobile Police team has been dispatched to the area to keep the peace.”

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