

Six killed in Benue communities war over boundary dispute

Cephas Iorhemen
MAKURDI

The people of Bonta, a community in Mbatorkindred of Mbaguss/Mbatser in Konshisha Local Government Area of Benue State, yesterday raised the alarm over alleged consistent attacks on its community by militants from their neighbouring Ukpute community in Oju, saying at the last count no fewer than six indigenes of the community have been murdered by the blood thirsty Ukpute community militants.

The Bonta people who noted that they had peacefully coexisted with the Ukpute community over the years, lamented recent plot by Ukpute community to forcefully usurp their land is brewing violence that has shattered their peaceful coexistence, even as Ukpute militia continues night raids on the community, killing, maiming and destroying properties.

They said, "What began 27 years ago as a boundary matter has erupted into a humanitarian crisis of staggering proportions, threatening lives

and displacing families".

Addressing a news conference in Makurdi on the continued attacks on the Bonta community by the Ukpute militia, the President and Secretary of Diiv Progressive Agenda (DiPA), Dr James Amove Ukpoko and Vooyum Agav, said Bonta people who are deeply rooted in a culture of agriculture and peace, have seen their livelihoods and stability attacked by Ukpute militias determined to seize their land by force.

They maintained that the assault on them "began after the

1997 disruption, triggered by claims to land leased to Messrs Approfin Nigeria by the Bonta community. With legal documentation firmly establishing Bonta ownership, we believed justice would prevail".

They disclosed that during one of the attacks, "the Ukpute militants destroyed their crops and displaced their families, stressing that despite pleas for peace, Ukpute's militants continued their campaign, undermining not only our security but also the values of neighbourliness we hold dear".