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Alago/Eggon communal clash: Death toll rises to 40

Written by Ademola Adegbite, Lafia
Tuesday, 05 June 2012

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More corpses were, at the weekend, recovered in Assakio, Lafia East Development Area of Nasarawa State, as the people of Alago and Eggon engage in a communal clash that has also rendered many homeless.

Impeccable sources told the Nigerian Tribune that over 40 people have so far been confirmed dead while properties worth millions of naira had been destroyed including the palace of the traditional ruler of the area, Chief Francis Inarigu, which was razed down by Eggon youths.

It was gathered that some of those taking refuge at Ashanga and Dunoma Primary Schools have been moved by government officials to an undisclosed hotel at Bukan-Sidi on the Lafia/Jos expressway.

As of the time of filing this report, 18 persons have been apprehended by the state police command with the assistance of the military personnel and men of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) deployed in the area to restore peace.

The state Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Mr Cornelius Ocholi, who confirmed the arrest to the Nigerian Tribune at the Police headquarters on Monday, declined to the number of casualties, but said normalcy had since been restored in the troubled area, adding that adequate security operatives had been deployed to maintain law and order.

He also disclosed that the state Commissioner of Police, Mr Abayomi Akeremale, has temporarily relocated his office to the area so as to personally monitor the situation and build confidence in residents.

It was further learnt that there was palpable fear on Sunday among Eggon people, as many of them deserted the community when information reached them that the people of Alago had sought the assistance of neighbouring communities to attack them.

A resident of the community who did not want his name in print said, "this is modern slavery! Why should Sarkin Assakio tell farmers of other tribes to be bringing a bag of rice each every year? He called us into his palace and said each farmer must be paying tribute by bringing a bag of rice, which was immediately rebuffed by Eggon people."

"He said if we cannot obey to this instruction, we must stop cultivating the land. We didn't take him serious until last week Thursday when the administrator of the development area addressed the people on the matter after which he was attacked by Alago youths. On Friday night, Alago people ordered all their female children married to Eggon men to come back home so they could attack Eggon people," an eyewitness recalled.

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