

14 Feared Dead in Enugu Communal Crisis

No fewer than 14 people were feared dead, and six houses burnt down following communal crisis which erupted at Mgbowo, a community in Awgu Local Government of Enugu State.

Eye witness account said over 15 people were injured and have been receiving treatment in some hospitals in Enugu State.

Our Correspondent was informed that the crisis started on Saturday following the alleged shooting of six youths from the Awgu community who were said to have protested the interference of security operatives in the community's annual new yam festival, known as 'iri ji' in Igbo.

The youths were said to have alleged that the policemen were invited by some people in the community on the apprehension that the festival might be used as a political forum by some politicians in Awgu.

Our source disclosed that the Police had arrived the community with armoured vehicle and were smashing canopies and seats arranged for the festival when the aggrieved youths protested over the development.

It was gathered that the youths in their protest had six of them shot dead, and several others injured near Mgbowo Boys

*From Francis Ugwoke
in Enugu*

Secondary School by the policemen, the venue of the cultural festival.

Our sources said angered by the killing of their colleagues, the youths rose in massive protests in the community to retaliate the action of the Police.

It was gathered that the youths in their vengeance went after some prominent indigenes who invited the police, burning over six houses belonging to them and their relations.

The crisis which started on Saturday was said to have lasted till Monday when the Enugu Police Commissioner, Mr. Charles Dawodu, visited Awgu, apparently to assess the situation and restore normalcy.

Our Correspondent who visited Awgu on Tuesday noticed that the people of the town were yet to recover from the shock arising from the incident.

An indigene of the town who spoke to THISDAY under anonymity said among the reasons for the violence was the appointment of two traditional rulers in the town who were said to be unpopular among the peo-

ple.

The traditional rulers, known as Igwes were said to have been appointed as a result of the creation of two autonomous communities by the Enugu State Government.

FG Streamlines Registration Procedures for Foreign Firms

By Tayo Ajakaye

The Federal Government has streamlined registration procedures for foreign firms to encourage further inflow of direct foreign investment into the country.

This is as the Office of Chinese Commercial Counselor in Lagos disclosed that trade volume between the two countries in 2005 stood at \$2.80bn, with a promise by the Counselor to address the trade imbalance which is in favour of China.

In Lagos where he met with the Chinese businessmen representing over 40 companies, the executive secretary/CEO of the Nigerian Investment Promotion Commission (NIPC), Engr. Mustafa Bello said the commission has put in place a one stop shop investment centre where relevant government agencies are brought to one location, coordinated and streamlined to provide prompt, efficient and transparent

services to investors. It was gathered that the two houses belonging to the traditional rulers were burnt down by the angry youths to retaliate the killing of their colleagues.

The youths are accusing the traditional rulers of being behind

the invitation of the police during the festival.

Enugu State Police Public Relations Officer, Mr. Mike Abattam told newsmen that the Police intervened in the matter when they were invited to restore

order. Claiming that investigation into the matter is ongoing, Abattam said that the visit of the Commissioner to the scene has helped in restoring peace in the town..

cedures and guidelines for issuance of business approvals, permits and licences thereby removing bottlenecks faced by investors in establishing and running businesses.

Types of services available in the first phase of OSS include business incorporation, registration and authorizations, instant granting of approvals – in – principle, permits and licences; and provision of investment information.

The core benefits of the process, according to Bello, is that it substantially reduces the cost of doing business, ensures FDI and investor tracking; and simplifies procedural steps.

It also shortens service delivery time without compromising policy objectives of the various agencies. Provision of investment information and advice to investors, ensuring close and professional working relationship among government agen-

The process coordinated by the NIPC which also provides frontline services in the One Stop Investment Centre (OSIC) guarantees the approval time of 24 hours for business entry. "The OSS covers investment in all sectors of the economy including oil and gas. The OSS serves both foreign and Nigerian investors," Mustafa stated.

The Chinese Commercial Counselor in Lagos, Mr. Hu Yujie who described the interactive session as a very good chance for the Chinese enterprises to learn about Nigerian laws and how to do business in Nigeria also stated that China is a potential market for Nigerian products.

He disclosed that trade volumes between the two countries for the years 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004 and 2005 were \$1.14bn, 1.17 bn, 1.86 bn, 2.18 bn and 2.80 billion respectively.