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30 Persons Die in Renewed Crisis in Nasarawa

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IGP, Mohammed Abubakar

- Killing of civilian JTF member sparks riot in Maiduguri
- Ogun Police Command loses anti-robbery squad chief
- EU donates €4.5m to peace efforts in Plateau

George Okoh , Michael Olugbode , Sheriff Balogun and Seriki Adinoyi

No fewer than 30 persons have been killed in renewed ethnic clash between the Eggon and Alago ethnic nationalities in Obi, the headquarters of Obi Local Government of Nasarawa State.

The clash in Nasarawa came as pandemonium erupted in Maiduguri, the Borno State capital, yesterday when youths in the town took to the streets to protest the alleged killing of a member of the youth vigilante group by a trigger-happy policeman.

And the Ogun State Police Command, yesterday night, lost the officer-in-charge of its anti-robbery squad, Mr. Folahan Ogunkoya, to a fatal auto crash

along the Sagamu-Siun-Abeokuta expressway during which two other persons were seriously injured.

The deceased was said to be travelling from Abeokuta, the state capital, in his Honda Accord car with registration number, Lagos MZ 717 AAA to Ijebu-Ode for an engagement, when the accident happened.

The Public Relations Officer of Ogun State Traffic Compliance Agency (TRACE), Akinbiyi Babatunde, who confirmed the incident, told newsmen that the car in which the police officer was travelling veered off his lane and hit an oncoming Prado Jeep travelling to Abeokuta.

All these came as the European Union (EU) doled out the sum of €4.5m to the peace efforts in Plateau State through its collaboration with APURIMAC ONLUS, a non-governmental organisation and two other civil society groups to pursue a stable peace process in the state.

An eyewitness to the Nasarawa clash said the incident began when some Eggon youths were detained by security operatives allegedly in collaboration with some youths suspected to be of Alago origin.

Another source said the crisis was sparked off following a tip-off by some Alago youths from Assakio, a neighbouring town to Lafia Local Government Area, who alerted their kinsmen in Obi that some Eggon militia, armed with sophisticated weapons, had taken off from Assakio to Obi to unleash terror on some Awe communities.

The situation led to some Alago youths, alongside some security operatives in Obi, to effect the arrest of two of the suspected Eggon militia and set their vehicle ablaze even as some of them were said to have ran away to the nearby bush.

The development according to unconfirmed sources did not go down well with the Eggon people of Tudun Adabu community who felt that their Eggon brothers were innocently arrested thereby barricading the Obi-Lafia highway.

They were said to have taken hostage, two Alago youths demanding for the release of their two brother as hostage. As if that was not enough, an Eggon man was said to have been attacked in Obi town and severely beaten by some Alago youths, a development which sparked off a reprisal leading to the total destruction of Odoibu, an Alago settlement.

The situation became so tensed as several houses were burnt while over 30 persons were said to have been killed when filling this report.

Security agencies including the military, the police, State Security Service (SSS) and Nigerian Security and Civil Defense Corp (NSCDC) were summoned by the state deputy governor, Daminishi Luka, to brain storm over the crisis while the remains of those who lost their lives in the crisis had been deposited at the Dalhatu Specialist Hospital (DASH) in Lafia.

Pandemonium erupted in Maiduguri, the Borno State capital, yesterday as youths in the town took to the streets to protest the alleged killing of a member of the youth vigilante group by a trigger-happy policeman.

The member of the youth vigilante group, popularly called Civilian JTF, according to thousands of irate youth who took the streets chanting, "police is Boko Haram", was shot dead by a policeman on patrol along the popular Kano road.

The protest caused traffic gridlock along the major roads for some hours as the vigilante youths aided by other youths in the town barricaded the road, burning tyres and wielding dangerous weapons to scare off motorists.

The irate youth were also seen trying to burn down the state police headquarters but were chased off by the soldiers who assisted the policemen on duty. A witness told reporters that many policemen were beaten up by the youths who went in search of any person in police uniform.

Another youth, who spoke to newsmen, alleged that they were on their way from where they went to arrest some suspected Boko Haram members and were about to hand them over to a military post opposite the Borno Express transport when they were confronted by two policemen who accused them of violating traffic law driving against the traffic.

He said in the ensuing argument one of the policemen threaten to shoot one of them and the youth dare him to shoot him, then he pulled the trigger. It was gathered that the policemen took to their heels after realising that they have killed the deceased.

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