

10 Killed in Benue, Ebonyi Boundary Clash

March 12, 2020 4:13 am

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About 10 persons have been killed in Ndiagu Orie, Umugudu-Akpu Ngbo community in Ohaukwu Local Government Area of Ebonyi State, following an attack by the Agila people of Ado Local Government Area of Benue State.

THISDAY gathered yesterday that the attack occurred on Tuesday despite heavy security presence in the area.

The attack came barely two weeks after a naval officer from Agila disappeared at Ngbo where he was last seen.

Investigation revealed that four members of the family of a staff of the Ebonyi State Broadcasting Corporation (EBBC), Mrs. Pauline Nwaneri, were reportedly killed in the latest incident.

THISDAY also learnt that some family members of the Public Relations Officer (PRO), Ebonyi State Ministry of Information, Mr. Eugene Ebenyi, were among the victims of the attack.

The incident also caused destruction of property worth millions of naira.

Confirming the incident, the Ebonyi State Police Command said the attack arose from renewed communal crisis between Agila and Ngbo.

In a statement issued by the spokesman of the command, Ms. Loveth Odah, a Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP), the police attributed the crisis to a re-enactment of the age-long border crisis between the two warring communities, which has led to loss of lives and destruction of property.

She said the people of Agila, numbering about 35, attacked the people of Ndiegu Orie in Umuogudu Akpo Ngbo, adding that the police swiftly mobilised to the area and "discovered that one Fidelis Ali Omem, 70 years old, one Helen Ali, 55yrs old and seven others had been murdered while one Titus Ugadu, 50 years old, was wounded and admitted to the hospital.

"The Commissioner of Police, Ebonyi State, Mr. Awosola Awotinde, undertook a tour to the crisis areas where he admonished the people to remain calm and not to carry out any action that will further jeopardise the peace process already initiated by the government, both at the state and federal level, especially the anticipated arrival of the National Boundary Adjustment Commission slated to visit Makurdi on March 26, 2020, for demarcation, as it is an age-long dispute that has defied previous peace initiatives. But the government of the day is working assiduously towards finding a permanent solution to it. Members of the public should not allow themselves to be manipulated and misled by agents of darkness using social media," she added.

Odah noted that security had been beefed up in the area with the deployment of riot policemen to avert further breakdown of law and order.

She appealed to the people of Ebonyi State to remain calm and law-abiding as the Police are doing everything possible to ensure the safety of lives and property in the troubled communities.

Meanwhile, the Chairman of Ohaukwu Local Government Area, Mr. Clement Odah, said nine persons were killed in the attack.

He accused the people of Agila of flouting the peace pact reached between the two communities.

Odah also called on the NBC to hasten up with the boundary demarcation to forestall further loss of lives.

According to him, "It is a thing of worry and shock that in spite of the efforts put so far, this magnitude of injury will be done to our people. We feel very bad about it. We condemn the killings.

"We use this opportunity to call on the federal government and specifically, call on the National Boundary Commission (NBC) to hasten up and do the needful.

"We have attended several meetings in Abuja at the instance of NBC. We have attended several other peace meetings in Enugu, Benue and Ebonyi States. All these meetings were geared toward restoring lasting peace.

"We have reached several peace pacts. But unfortunately, the peace agreements we have reached which we believed will give us peace have been breached by our neighbours from Agila. This is very unfortunate," he added.