

# 25 Die in Ebonyi Communal Clash, Says Umahi

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Ebonyi State Governor, Mr. David Umahi, yesterday said 25 deaths have so far been recorded in the lingering communal crisis between the people of Effium and Ezza Effium in the Effium community of the Ohaukwu Local Government Area of the state.

He spoke in Abakaliki, the state capital during a meeting with stakeholders of the community to find lasting solution to the carnage in the area.

The crisis began last month as a clash between two factions of the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) in the town but soon spread into the community.

Umahi said 26 arms have so far been recovered from the area.

He regretted that 125 houses, fuel and gas stations were also burnt.

He blamed the Chairman of Ohaukwu LG Council, Mr. Clement Odah, who is from the community and the member representing Ohaukwu North constituency in the House of Assembly, Hon. Chinedu Awo for the crisis.

He said the crisis would not have occurred if Odah and Awo had listened to his instructions on how to solve the little problems occurring in the community before it escalated to the uncontrollable situation.

"Let us not forget that this problem started by the Council Chairman, Clement Odah and Hon. Chinedu Awo, the House of Assembly member.

"When the problem started between them, I called them severally one-on-one, three of us. We sat and I pleaded with them. In fact, at a time, one of them walked out on me.

"It took my begging to the Speaker for the House not to sack the person on this same issue. I just took it that there is nothing a father will not see; there is nothing leadership will not see. Two of them are in supremacy battle for 2023 that they do not know whether they will see".

He added: "Officially, we have recorded about 25 deaths, 26 arms recovered from the hoodlums, about 125 houses burnt, fuel and gas stations burnt. I have written to Minister of Humanitarian Services to come to our aid, I have written to NEMA to come to our aid."

He alleged that money was being contributed by the warring parties to promote the crisis and vowed that he will prosecute anybody sponsoring the killings in the community.

"There is no way Ezzas will say that they don't know what is happening at Effium and there is no way that Effium will say that they don't know what is happening at Effium.

"If they ask you to contribute money whether you know what the money is for or you don't know what the money is for, the moment you contribute to spilling of blood, it means that you and your generation to the 5th generation will be cursed".

"If you are here or you know anybody contributing money to buy arms to spill innocent blood, you have to go home and begin prayers because come rain come sunshine, the word of God must come to pass, whether you like it or not.

"We are all here because God gave us the opportunity. A small diabetes or kidney problem or cancer will demobilise anybody but you don't have it because of the mercy and the grace of God. So, I have called you as our leaders and stakeholders to ask what do we do to stop this? Enough is enough!"

Umahi also blamed Commissioner for local government, Mr. Samuel Okoronkwo and his Special Assistant on Parks Development, Mr. Emmanuel Igwe for the crisis.

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