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## Herdsmen, natives in Benue communal clash

Written by Peter Duru

Tuesday, 11 March 2008

FOUR persons are feared dead and several others injured in a renewed clash between the native of Tiv community and some Fulani herdsmen at Orkpe, Mbakur, a village some 10 kilometers South East of Makurdi, following an alleged pollution of a community dam by a group of Fulani herdsmen. Consequently a detachment of the state's mobile police force has been drafted to the area to quell the clashes and disarm all rival groups.

The face off started last weekend.

A source at the village told Vanguard that the community has been facing perennial water scarcity necessitating the construction of a dam in the area through community effort. It has remained the only source of drinking water for the people.

According to the source, last Friday, women from the community had gone to the dam to fetch drinking water, only to discover that some Fulani herdsmen were bathing inside the dam.

The women then allegedly rebuked the herdsmen who became offended and threatened to shoot them.

The frightened women then reported the matter to members of the community who rushed to see things for themselves.

On sighting the natives, the Fulanis were said to have assumed that they had mobilised to attack them for defiling the water and they started shooting which eventually sparked off the communal fight.

Benue Police Commissioner, Ibiyinka Kayode, who confirmed the outbreak of hostilities in the community, however denied that four persons died, stressing that the Police have recovered only one corpse so far.

The villagers gave the names of the dead as Mike and Terver, while one Moses is still missing and a Fulani herdsman was also killed.

Meanwhile the Special Adviser to the Governor on Security Matters, Col. Benjamin Aboho (rtd) accompanied by the Kindred and District Heads of the area, Aemberga kyav and Pius Tyo addressed members of the Mbakur community at Orkpe primary school where he sued for peace, but regretted that the Fulanis have shunned a peace meeting convened by the government for fear of attacks.

It will be recalled that not too long ago similar clashes between the Tiv community of Guma LGA of Benue state led to the death of not fewer than 20 Fulani herdsmen when the boat they were travelling in to escape a reprisal attack from their host community sank off the coast of River Benue.

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