

2 dead, 3 shot in Ebonyi communal clash

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TWO persons were feared dead while three others sustained gunshot wounds with houses destroyed when youths from two rival groups in Ngbo, Ohaukwu Local Government Area of Ebonyi State clashed over a misunderstanding that arose shortly after the last Easter celebrations.

Residents of Ndiolyibe in the Ngbo community have reportedly fled the area for fear of reprisal attack after youths from their area beat one Erema Christian to death and inflicted gunshot injuries on three others.

The state police public relations officer, Frederick N-Nuudam, said that on receiving the report of the mayhem, the area commander in charge of the local government and the DPO had been directed to go to Ngbo for an on-the-spot assessment.

N-Nuudam said that calm had returned to the area, but was quick to add that "we have drafted a

unit of the Police Mobile Force to the area, we have our surveillance men on ground and other plain clothes officers to unravel the situation. According to him, "no arrest has so far been made but we are sure that those behind the murder and the attempted murder would be arrested".

Eye witness accounts indicated that the atmosphere of fear and general insecurity in the area began when youths from Ndiolyibe in the height of the Easter celebrations set up a barricade at a point known as Oriaja along the Umuoguduakpu road and started molesting youths from the neighbouring Amainyi who retaliated.

But what first appeared as mere youthful display of exuberance degenerated into violence when the youths accosted one Christian Erema, who in a bid to resist the assault attracted pummeling and clubbing following which Erema slumped and went into a coma.

Passers-by were said to have rushed Erema to a nearby hospital where sources said he

gave up the ghost the following day.

Narrating how the news of sudden death of the 22-year old Erema which filtered into the community threw the Amainyi people into panic and pain, villagers revealed that youths from the area went into a frenzy and burnt down a ramshackle stall belonging to one Eze Oselebe Senior believed to be supportive of the excesses of youths from Ndiolyibe.

But for the wise counsel of elders of Amainyi who intervened by prevailing on the youths to avoid further revenge, the sources added, a major blood bath would have been recorded leading to the escalation of the crisis before policemen were drafted to the area. However youths from Ndiolyibe were said to have renewed their offensive after a top government official who hails from secured assurances that the police would not arrest any of his Ndiolyibe kinsmen suspected to be involved in the murder of Christian Erema.