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Monarch, 5 others feared dead in communal clash

Written by Emma Amaize & Simon Adewale
Friday, 20 March 2009

WARRI—A traditional ruler in Niger-Delta and five other indigenes of his community were feared dead, yesterday, after gunmen invaded the village, setting ablaze scores of houses.

Vanguard learnt that the incident took place at Umuebu community in Ukwuani Local Government Area of Delta State in the early hours of yesterday.

A reliable source said that the massacre was carried out by armed youths from the neighbouring Amai community.

Already the Joint Task Force (JTF) on the Niger-Delta has deployed men in the area to keep the peace while a manhunt has been mounted for the gunmen.

Coordinator of the Joint Media Campaign of the JTF, Colonel Rabe Abubakar, confirmed the incident, saying, "At least, a monarch, whose name was yet to be confirmed and five other indigenes of Umuebu, were feared dead due to the early morning invasion of 19 March, 2009 of the community by youths of Amai. Both Amai and Umuebu communities are of Ukwani Local Government Area of Delta State.

"According to reports from the combined troops of the Joint Task Force (JTF), Operation RESTORE HOPE, and Delta State Joint Patrol Team who rushed to the scene from Umutu, the invading youths of Amai had set numbers of houses ablaze before the intervention of the troops," he said.

Colonel Abubakar said: "Development in the two communities is being monitored by the patrol team to forestall any reawakening of conflict. The JTF is however warning all enemies of peace and quiet to join in the crusade for peace."

He called on youths of Amai Community in particular and those of Delta State generally to abhor violence because, "the JTF will not hesitate to deal with any individual or group, who may want to derail government's fine plan for Niger Delta region".

"Nonetheless, all law-abiding citizens are free to go about their legitimate business", Abubakar asserted.

Meanwhile, a group, the Ndokwa National Youths has urged Governor Emmanuel Uduaghan of Delta State to intervene in the crisis between the two warring communities over a piece of land which has been on for quite for some time.

In a statement signed by the group's president, Comrade Friday Ossai, it said "we cannot continue to lose lives and property in our war with our sister communities over a piece of land, so the Delta State Government should intervene to bring a lasting peace in the area.



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