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## BOUNDARY DISPUTE: 2 feared dead, 1 missing in Ebonyi

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\*10 houses burnt, 150 displaced

By Peter Okutu

ABAKALIKI—NO fewer than two persons were yesterday reportedly killed while one member of the affected community was declared missing as 10 houses were burnt and properties worth millions of naira looted following a resurgence of attack on the people of Ochienyim community in Ikwo Local Government Area of Ebonyi State allegedly by some members of a neighboring community of Adadama in Abi Local Government Area of Cross River State.



Gov Dave Umahi of Ebonyi State

As a result of the attack, Vanguard learned that over 150 persons have now been displaced.

In a chat with newsmen on the recent attack on the community by militants from Adadama community, a youth leader in the affected community and relation to one of the victims, Mr. Samuel Nomeh gave the names of those killed by the attackers as Mr. Elijah Nomeh and Mr. Agashi Onuenyim.

Mr. Nomeh stated that at about 9am, some militants numbering more than 20 and armed with sophisticated weapons, invaded their community, shot sporadically, burnt houses and looted properties of the people of Ochienyim community in Ebonyi State.

According to him: “The attack was the 4th in the series of attacks by the people of Adadama community on our people since the Assistant Inspector General of Police in-charge of zone 6 called a meeting of the 2 communities asking for a cease fire.

“On February 17th 2016, the people of Adadama invaded our community with dangerous weapons but fortunately nobody was killed; we reported the invasion to the police. On the 19th, they also invaded our community but we were able to resist them, because of the appeal of the AIG. We usually report the matter to him and usually we get assurance that such

would not happen again but to the surprise of many, on the 8th of March 2016, they came in their numbers shooting and burnt 6 houses that faithful day.

“While we were still trying to recover from the shock of the invasion, they invaded our community again killing 2 persons, burnt 10 houses, looted our livestock and household appliances and displaced more than 150 persons especially women and children”.

Mr. Nomeh further recalled that on the 24th of October 2015, the militants also attacked the community, shot a police officer, burnt 20 houses and abducted some persons from the community.

Mr. Nomeh who accused some top government officials of Cross River state of sponsoring the militants insisted that the sort of weapons the militants brandished were too sophisticated.

Contacted, the State Deputy Governor, Dr. Kelechi Igwe who expressed dismay over the development stated that the communal crisis was still being investigated.

Igwe who is the State Chairman of the Inter Boundary Committee added that the Committee would soon visit the affected community to ascertain the level of destruction in the area, get statistics of all those affected and provide the necessary succour.

Meanwhile, another displaced victim and a mother of 7 who is currently taking refuge in a primary school building with her children, Mrs. Mary Ogeji regretted that in all the attacks, the people of the community have remained calm, hoping that the relevant authorities would come to their rescue. Mrs.

Ogeji accused the state government of being insensitive towards the plight of the people, noting that no government official has visited the community to commensurate with the deceased families.  
or the displaced victims.

She further pointed out that more 600 persons have been displaced by the communal crisis and called on the state government and the National Emergency Management Agency NEMA to come to the aid of the displaced persons.

As at press time, the Ebonyi State Police Public Relations Officer, PPRO, ASP George Okafor was yet to confirm the death toll in the area.

“The village Chairman of Ochienyim community reported that one Elijah Nomeh was missing and men of the command have combed the whole buffer zone and there is no trace of said person or any of his wears to indicate he has been killed. For now we presume he was abducted by the people of Adadama.

“It is unfortunate that on the faithful day, there was gunshot around the buffer zone, yet he decided to go and harvest cassava there; we are not aware of the second person but I can assure you that only one person is still missing”.

**IKENNA**

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