

2 killed, 12 missing in Delta community war

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By Ochuko Akuopha

OLEH—NO fewer than two persons have been reportedly killed, and scores of others wounded in renewed hostilities between members of Ugbo family and the people of Ibrede community, Ndokwa East Local Government Area, Delta State, over a disputed piece of land.

Twelve persons were also alleged to be missing in the intra-communal clash, which broke out in the community over the weekend.

Over 57 houses were set ablaze in the crisis that erupted in the area on April 30, 2014, over the land which contains several lakes and brooks.

Vanguard gathered that trouble started when members of the feuding parties engaged in a heated argument after they accosted themselves on the land, a development which degenerated into brutal attacks.

President-General of Ibrede community, Mr. Finbarrs Onomerhike, said he was told that his people were on their way to Otue Lake in neighbouring Akarai community when they were ambushed by the Ugbo family.

He said: “I was not in the community when it happened, but I was briefed that two of our people were shot dead by members of the Ugbo family. One person is in critical condition, while many others have gunshot injuries.”

‘They shot at themselves’

Efforts to reach the Chairman of Ugbo family, Mr. Israel Arueighe, were abortive at press time, but a source in the Ugbo family said: “The information that reached me was that the community people shot at Ugbo people and in the process, bullets hit some of their people.

“As we speak, 12 of our family members are still missing.”

He accused the community of flouting a March 25, 2014 injunction by the High Court in Kwale, which he alleged restrained everybody in the Ibrede community, except the Ugbo family, from carrying out fishing activities in the lake.

The source, who craved anonymity, said: "I heard that for the past one week, they have been going to the lake to beat up Ugbo men and women. They said until Ugbo people stopped going to the lake, they will continue to go there."

Contacted, Police Public Relations Officer of the state Police Command, Celestina Kalu, confirmed the incident and said the situation had been brought under control.

Acting Chairman of Ndokwa East Local Government Area, Mr. Dickson Okonta, said efforts were being made to bring peace back to the community.