

3 killed as communities clash in Ebonyi

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*Umahi seizes disputed land

By Peter Okutu

ABAKALIKI—EBONYI State Police Command, yesterday confirmed the killing of three persons in renewed hostility between the people of Onweonweiya and Mkpumaekweoku communities in Izzi local government area of Ebonyi State.

The incident led to the destruction of landed properties worth millions of naira and the setting ablaze of buildings in the area.

On Monday, Governor David Umahi visited the troubled communities to assess the level of destruction in the area.

Police Public Relations Officer, PPRO Ebonyi State Command, Jude Madu, while confirming the development, said the Police was prepared to forestall law and order in the area.

“We are aware of the misunderstanding in Izzi land. We now have an official report that there was a communal clash at the two neighbouring villages both in Ndieze, Inyimagu community in Ominyi Development Centre, Izzi LGA. The DC Coordinator, Njoku Cajetan reported the clash to the Police in the area. And the dispute is over a parcel of rice farmland.

“As a result, the DPO and his men moved in quickly to save the situation. The CP also mobilized from the state headquarters and by the time our team got there, we discovered that some houses were razed by fire orchestrated by the invading Onweonweya people. Also, part of the said farmland was razed and we were able to recover three bodies, out of which two have been confirmed dead,” he said.

The PPRO who maintained that the Command was yet to make any arrest added that it has commenced investigations into the incident.

The identities of the three persons were yet to be known as at the time of filing this report.

In a reaction, Governor David Umahi has ordered the state government's take-over of the disputed land.

Umahi said the measure was to forestall future bloodshed between the people of Mkpuma-Ekwoku and Ogwuzeru-Onweya communities.