

2 die in C'River, Benue communal clash

By Ike Uchechukwu

C'ALABAR—NO fewer than two persons are feared dead following a communal clash between the people of Obudu in Cross River and Vandiekya of Benue State.

Vanguard learned that trouble broke out in the early hours of yesterday, when Vandiekya youths launched an attack on their Obudu neighbours.

Both communities have been engaged in war for years over a farmland, leading to wanton destruction of property and subsequent killings.

An eyewitness, Andrew Ishamali, who spoke with *Vanguard* on phone, said trouble started when an Obudu farmer went to his farm and was harassed and inflicted with machete cuts; he ran back home.

Ishamali explained that on

getting home, his kinsmen in Obudu mobilised and launched an attack on Vandiekya community and equally injured some people.

In apparent reprisal, the Vandiekya community invaded the border area in Obudu and caused some mayhem.

The invasion, however, escalated as it later developed into full scale war, leading to death of two persons.

Vanguard learned that the students of Federal College of Education, FCE, were said to have deserted the premises for fear of attack.

Contacted, Permanent Secretary in charge of security matters in governor's office, Dr. Alfred Mboto, said he was aware of the clash and that the police commissioners of both states have mobilised.

His words: "We are aware of the clash between Obudu and

Benue and the police commissioners of both states have mobilised security to the conflict zone.

"We have not got any official report of any death so far. But I assure you that peace has been restored there. Besides, we are meeting to ensure it doesn't reoccur."

On her part, the Police Public Relations Officer in Cross River state, DSP Irene Igbo, also confirmed the incident, adding that Police have been deployed in the area.

Her words: "I am aware of the crisis between Obudu and Vandiekya in Benue State.

"But I can tell you we have the situation under control because we have deployed our men to the area likewise the command in Benue State, and calm has returned to the affected areas."

IGP visits policemen injured by Shi'ites protesters