

## Youths kill 8 in Taraba, 3 die in Benue communal crises

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By Peter Duru & Femi Bolaji

No fewer than eight persons were reportedly killed, yesterday, by irate youths in Takum Local Government Area of Taraba State in a reprisal attack over the death of a Jukun man allegedly killed on his farm along Takum-Wukari Road.



Youths(Mob)

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Also, three persons were also feared killed in a bloody conflict between the youths of Edumoga and Okpoga in Okpokwu Local Government Area of Benue State.

Confirming the Takum incident, spokesman of the Taraba State Police Command, DSP David Misal, however, said only two persons were killed and that the situation has been brought under control.

According to him, "one person was killed on the farm, which is under dispute, this morning (yesterday) and some youths in Takum attacked and killed an alleged relative to the people in dispute over the said parcel of land with the slain man.

"The land matter has been in court and two months ago a relative of the person killed on the same land today (yesterday) was killed on the same farm. We have since brought the situation under control."

A resident, Nathaniel Jato, in a telephone interview, said: "We counted, at least, eight dead bodies around General Hospital Junction and Zenith Bank around Wukari Roundabout."

Jato further called on Governor Darius Ishaku and security authorities to quickly restore peace in the area to pave way for proper investigation into the matter.

On the fresh outbreak of bloody conflict between the youths of Edumoga and Okpoga in Okpokwu Local Government Area of Benue State, it was gathered that the protracted crisis between Ollo community in Edumoga District and parts of Okpoga, erupted again Monday night when Ollo youths allegedly attacked parts of Okpoga.

A source said: "The attack left three persons dead, several others sustained serious injuries while some are still missing. The attackers also looted the property of their victims before retreating to Ollo.

"This latest attack may not be unconnected to the killing of a young man in Aidogodo, Okpoga by suspected rival cult members about two weeks ago.

"Many are saying it could be a reprisal for that attack, which generated so much tension and fear among residents of both communities, who have been at loggerheads for several years now."

Contacted, Caretaker Chairman of Okpokwu council, Mrs. Amina Audu, who lamented the persistent conflicts in the area, said: "It is a protracted crisis that has been on for several years.

"Since I came into office, it has been one crisis to another. About two weeks ago, a young man was killed after some hoodlums from Okpoga attacked Olaiyega in Edumoga, killing a youth, looted their property including electricity transformer in the community.

"There was another attack yesterday (Monday). This time they killed one person and looted property, after we had held several peace meetings in conjunction with the State Police Command to calm frayed nerves and to ensure peaceful co-existence among the people."

Contacted, Police Public Relations Officer, Deputy Superintendent Catherine Anene, said she was yet to get details of the crisis.

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