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As indigenes, settlers clash in Benue: 2 killed, many injured, over 200 houses razed, 5,000 displaced

ON APRIL 29, 2020 8:35 AM / IN [NEWS](#) /

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**By Peter Duru**

A communal clash between two sister communities of Mbaivur and Mbasombo in Ayati Ikpayongo, Gwer Local Government Area of Benue State has reportedly claimed the life of a middle-aged man, Dekuran Nor, with many sustaining severe injuries.

The crisis, which has left about 5,000 persons displaced, also led to the burning of close to 200 houses, huts, economic trees and food barns in Mbaivur.

Among the houses touched was the home of the Health Coordinator, Catholic Diocese of Makurdi, Rev. Fr. Peter Paleve, whose parents and siblings narrowly escaped being murdered by the attackers.

An eyewitness told Vanguard that the crisis, which started in early hours of Monday, led to the sacking of the entire Mbaivur community by the armed youths from Mbasombo, who shot sporadically, chasing the residents from the community.

According to him, “it is shameful that people, who have lived together and had children even up to great-grandchildren in their present locations, can get up to accuse their brothers of being settlers in the same community.

“That is how the Mbasombo people ignited this shameful crisis. They suddenly woke up and asked all the people of Mbaivur, who are the immediate neighbours of the Catholic Pilgrimage Centre on the Makurdi-Aliade road to vacate their homes and move to another location in the community.

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“They claimed that they gave Mbaivur people the land several years ago for the purpose of farming and not to bury their dead and vowed to sack them from the land.

“Yesterday (Monday) they stormed Mbaivur, shooting sporadically, burning down houses, food barns and economic trees of the people. They left many people injured and killed Dekuran Nor, whose corpse was discovered in the bush while over 5,000 persons fled to Ikpayongo town.

“The people felt betrayed because while the attack was going on, the Caretaker Chairman of the local government area, Mr Nickolas Utukwa, who rushed to the community, also fled the scene for fear of being killed by the armed youths.

“Again, the people are accusing the traditional rulers in Gwer Local Government Area of not doing enough to stop the crisis, which has taken a worrisome dimension.

It was reprisal attack—Abar

Reacting, President Mbasombo Development Association, Mr Anchongo Abar, said the attack was a reprisal, adding: “The people of Mbaivur macheted our son, Igbasue Ayagwa, in the farm last Saturday evening.

He is still receiving treatment in the hospital and on Sunday night the same youths killed his aged father, Ayagwa Amu, at home.

“The killing angered our youths, which sparked Monday’s attack and reprisal on Mbaivur though I am not aware that anybody died in the attack.

Contacted, the Police Public Relations Officer, Catherine Anene, who confirmed the crisis said she was yet to receive update on the conflict but added that security had been beefed up in the area.

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