

Militant youths invade A-Ibom community, kill 5, injure 7 ● One dies in Edo community clash

By Harris Emanuel & Ozioruva Aliu

UYO—NO fewer than five persons have allegedly been killed and seven others injured in renewed hostilities over land between Uko Ntenghe and Uko Akpan communities in Mbo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State, Monday.

It was gathered that militant youths from Uko Ntenghe reportedly invaded the farmland and raped a woman who they also took hostage, while a detachment was said to have sneaked into Uko Akpan in Enwang, the headquarters and killed five persons.

An eye witness said the armed youths shot sporadically, as resident scamped for safety. They also burnt down two houses and several cars in the serene village, which is now deserted.

The whereabouts of the clan head, Obong Bassey Atabia II, is not yet known, while one of his sons is said to be among those injured by the militants.

A youth leader, Michael Etim, appealed to the state government and security agencies to help restore calm in the area.

"This is a matter of life and death. Those in the village are not safe," he lamented.

Secretary to the State Government, Dr Emmanuel Ekuwem, an indigene of the local government area, could not be reached at press time, as calls and message sent to his phone and WhatsApp were not answered.

The Police said they were on top of the situation, but the Enwang community wants reinforcement from other sister security agencies to safeguard lives and property.

Police Public Relations Officer, Odiko MacDon, said: "We are on it. Our men are on ground there."

One dies in Edo community clash

Meanwhile, there were fear and anxiety in Igarra, Akoko-Edo Local Government Area of Edo State over the death of a young man, Ajitwunmeshe Emmah, popularly known as Lacombe, who was said to have been killed by yet to be identified persons.

Many shops in Ugbogbo part of Igarra did not open and a local market that holds in the heart of the area popularly called Ofua-momo, which opens once in four days, was also deserted, yesterday, because of the killing.

Vanguard gathered that there was a clash between two groups of masquerades, Monday, after the annual Ekuochi festival that led to several people sustaining injuries as they were inflicted with machetes and axes. Among the injured was the chairman, Police Community Relations Committee (PCRC), Chief Folorunsho Okomayin.

Yet, another version said the clash might not be far from the on-going clashes among rival cult groups in the state.

A member of the vigilante group in Igarra locality said: "After the annual Ekuochi festival, there is always the merriment later in the evening when several masquerades and young people come back to town to continue the celebrations."

"On Monday, there were two masquerades that were permitted to

come out but a third one came and instead of the members carrying sticks, they came out with knives, axes and machetes and there was clash and several persons were injured and some hospitalised but normalcy was restored later that evening. I was shocked when we heard in the early hours of yesterday (Tuesday) that the boy was shot dead."

Man, 55, beats relative to death over bush-burning

By James Ogunnaike

ABEOKUTA—A 55 year old Aman, Ishau Falana, has been arrested by the Ogun State Police Command for allegedly killing his relative, one Badmus Rafiu.

A release by the command spokesman, Abimbola Oyeyemi, said: "The suspect was arrested following a complaint lodged at Ayetoro Divisional Headquarters by a younger brother to the deceased."

"The complainant reported that the deceased went to their farm at Oluwasogo area of Ifaka Isale only to be accosted by the suspect, who challenged him for burning bush very close to his farm."

"He stated further that fight ensued between them, as a result of the argument, consequent upon

Vanguard gathered that a formal complaint had been laid at the Igarra Police Station and police were already investigating.

Contacted, the traditional ruler of Igarra, HRH Oba Adeche Saiki Oturu said: "It has some connection with Ekuochi and no, doubt, I believe that this issue of cultism also came into play. But this Ekuochi festival was first banned and the ban lifted after they reached some

agreement to be peaceful and this is the third one.

"I think we have to go back to square one about the banning because it is an abomination for any masquerade to use its cane on an elder in the community."

"Immediately the news of the death got to me, I immediately reported to the police and the army. They are already working to ensure there is peace in the land."



Ishau, the suspect.

which the suspect overpowered the deceased, tied his hands and legs with rope and used a stick to beat him to state of coma before leaving

him there and returned to the town.

"The following day when the deceased mother got to the farm, she met him already dead."

"Upon the report, the Divisional Police Officer, DPO, of Ayetoro Division, Bolaji Jimoh, detailed his detectives to the scene from where the corpse was recovered to the general hospital mortuary for post mortem examination. The suspect was then traced and apprehended."

"On interrogation, he confessed tying the deceased's legs and hands before beating him to coma, but claimed that he never knew that it would lead to his death."

Oyeyemi added that the Commissioner of Police, Edward Ajogun, has ordered the transfer of the suspect to the homicide section of the State Criminal Investigation and Intelligence Department for further investigation and diligent prosecution.

Fire guts Nsukka timber market, razes N200m worth of goods

By Ikechukwu Odu

NSUKKA—Goods worth millions of naira were reportedly destroyed as fire razed Nsukka timber market, Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State, Monday.

It was gathered that the fire razed about 20 shops, destroying timber materials and machines before personnel from Nsukka Fire Service put out the fire.

Though the cause of the fire outbreak was yet to be ascertained at press time, Chairman, Association of Nsukka Timber Market Traders, Jude Eze, and the local government boss, Cosmas Ugwuweze, said no stone would be left unturned in unravelling the remote and immediate causes of the incident.

While reacting to the incident, chairman of the market association, Eze, who said he was saddened by the development, called on government and good spirited individuals to come to the aid of the victims to start life over again.

He said: "Goods worth over N200 million were damaged by this incident. It affected at least 20 traders. I want government at both state and local government levels to come to our assistance to enable the victims to continue with their businesses."

"I also want them to sink a borehole for us here and equally give us a fire-fighting vehicle to curtail incidences like this from recurring."

One of the victims, Harrison Nweke, said he lost two luster generators, goods and eight technical machines, all totalling to about N19 million.



Chairman, Nsukka LGA, Enugu State, Cosmas Ugwuweze (middle), assessing the extent of damage at the scene of fire outbreak.

Nweke, a father of five, also added that all his savings were consumed by the fire incident, calling on the governments at all levels to come to his assistance.

Other victims also called on the government for assistance to start their businesses from the scratch. They also begged the government for a permanent solution to the incessant fire outbreak in the market.

Chairman of the council area, Ugwuweze, who was at the scene of the incident for an on-the-spot assessment, charged the market association to constitute a panel of inquiry to unravel the remote and immediate causes of the fire outbreak.

The chairman, who also sympathised with the victims for their losses at this time of national economic crunch, also pledged to assist the victims, adding: "As a government, we would also investigate the incident. It is no longer ordinary because there was a fire outbreak almost this time last year. So, all hands must be on deck to find a lasting solution to this incessant outbreaks."

2 suspected cultists arrested, others injured in gun battle with Police

By Adelaja Abosede

PANDEMONIUM broke out in Igbelara area of Ikorodu, Lagos State, yesterday, after suspected members of the Aiye confraternity opened fire on a team of policemen, who had gone there to restore peace.

However, at the end of the crossfire, two suspected cultists—Waliyu and Timileyin Omobolaji—were arrested with wounds, while others, who were injured were taken to the hospital.

A cut-to-size pistol, 10 expended cartridges and six life ammunition were recovered from the cultists.

For two weeks, there has been a crisis between rival cult groups in the area. Unconfirmed reports said some of them, including innocent residents, were killed in the process, with several others injured.

Explaining, the Lagos State

Police Command image-maker, CSP Oluymiwa Adejebi, said: "The Police responded to a distress call from members of the public that some suspected cultists were seen at Igbelara area with dangerous weapons to foment troubles. The policemen, with the help of some community members, raced to the scene, only for the deadly gang to open fire on them."

"The operatives, in a swift reaction, responded and engaged the men, leaving some of them injured. They fled with bullet wounds. Two of them were eventually arrested, while the injured ones have been taken to hospital."

"The Commissioner of Police, Lagos State, Hakeem Odumosu, has appealed to the general public, especially medical practitioners, to alert the police whenever they come across any of the fleeing suspected cultists with bullet wounds."

Troops kill 2 bandits in Kagarko LGA

By Ibrahim Hassan Wuyo

TWO bandits were reportedly killed, Monday night, along Sabon Iche-Kagarko Road, Kagarko Local Government Area, Kaduna State by troops under the auspices of Operation Thunder Strike.

According to the operational feedback to the Kaduna State government, the troops laid an ambush along the route following credible intelligence on the bandits' movement in the area.

Kaduna State Commissioner, Ministry of Internal Security and Home Affairs, Samuel Aruwan, disclosed, yesterday, that the bandits, while attempting to invade the road for an operation, entered the killing zone and the troops opened fire. The bandits returned fire as they beat a hasty retreat.

He said: "After the firefight, the dead bodies of two bandits were retrieved by the troops, with the rest suspected to have escaped with gunshot wounds. The troops suffered no casualties."

"Confirmation from local sources revealed that the bandits were indeed part of the notorious group terrorising the area."

"While expressing his elation at the report, Governor Nasir el-Rufai praised the troops' gallantry and congratulated them for a successful expedition. Aggressive patrols will continue in the general area."

He warned that any locals found harbouring or providing medical aid to bandits with bullet wounds will be charged as bandits.