

One killed, houses torched as crisis erupts in Delta community



...We're not sure of cause of crisis

— **Ethiope East council chair**

By Jimitota Onoyume, Warri

One person was shot dead and two houses were set ablaze, yesterday, in a crisis that erupted in Eku community, Ethiope East Local Government Area of Delta State.

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There were conflicting accounts on the cause of the situation with some linking it to the differences between some members of the anti-cult group and some persons in the community.

Chairman of Ethiope East council, Ofobrukueta Victor, who confirmed the death and the crisis in a phone chat with Vanguard, said he had also gone to address the community people on the need to allow peace to reign.

On the cause of the crisis, he said unconfirmed account linked it to disagreement between some members of the vigilante and the anti-cult group.

"This has not been confirmed by the police. Some of those who should provide information are not around. Peace has returned to the town. I was there to address them, to appeal to all to allow peace to reign. Nobody knows who killed the young man. The police will do a thorough investigation," he said.

Another version said the death of the youth on Tuesday night provoked the crisis but nobody could say who fired the shot.

One of those whose businesses were attacked in the crisis and a member of the anti-cult group in the community, Mr Tony, said he was not sure if it was a problem between the anti-cult group and some youths.

He said: "I have not been in the community for some time. I got call today (yesterday) that my business premises on Etche Road in Eku were destroyed. They also damaged some portions of my house and set ablaze a car in my compound. I am not sure this is a clash between some youths and our anti-cult body.

"I have not been around. I have been getting calls since the incident started this morning (yesterday). I am heading back to the community now."

Vanguard gathered that the crisis crippled economic activities in the town as most stores around the four junctions in the town could not open for business, while parents did not allow their children go to school.

At press time, policemen had been deployed to maintain peace in the town.

An sms to the state Police Public Relations Officer, Bright Edafe, for reaction on the development, had not been responded to at press time.