

Opu-Nembe killings: Bayelsa Reps caucus asks Tinubu to probe police

●Says killings politically-motivated

By Gift Chapi-Odekina

ABUJA—The Bayelsa State caucus in the House of Representatives has called on President Bola Tinubu to set up an inquiry into the police killing and maiming of innocent citizens of Opu-Nembe community in Nembe Local Government Area of Bayelsa State.

The caucus at a briefing by Marie Ebikake, representing Brass/Nembe federal constituency, condemned the unprovoked killings in the area, alleging that it may not be unconnected with the forthcoming governorship election in the state.

She said: "We want to in the strongest terms condemn the killing and maiming of innocent citizens in Opu-Nembe in Nembe

council of Bayelsa State, acting on the behest of individuals bent on destroying the existing peace with the invasion of Opu-Nembe (Bassambiri) by men of the Nigeria Police Force (SWAT) in a Gestapo fashion.

"What happened at Opu-Nembe community on August 12, 2023, is politically-motivated and targeted at destroying the peace that the prosperity administration led by Governor Douye Diri has brought to Bayelsa State, which is enjoyed by all.

"We want to use this opportunity to call on the President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, Tinubu, to as a matter of urgency, empanel a high powered commission of inquiry on the immediate and remote causes, including the role of the Nigeria Police, particularly the SWAT department, their source of funding and other individuals who played roles in the armed

invasion to ensure the perpetrators are fished out and made to face the wrath of the law.

"This will not only act as deterrent but also send a message to individuals with selfish agenda not to tarnish the image of your government and the democratic reputation you have brought into governance.

"We wish to commend the immediate response of the Bayelsa State government led by Governor Diri to the crisis and the effort to dilute the tension in the affected community."

"The raid caused death of innocent citizens and indiscriminate arrest and detention of scores of Opu Nembe (Bassambiri) youths, who are presently in the custody of the Nigeria Police at Abuja.

"May we, also, remind the IGP that a 'sting' operation of such nature carried out in total disregard of existing protocols, with

regards to the role of the governor as the chief security officer of the state, within his domain, in the clear absence of imminent threat to national security is not only a threat to our democracy but raises questions of the presence of the Joint Security Task Force stationed in the community over the years.

"We implore the commission of inquiry set up in the aftermath of the incident to determine the root cause of the crisis and proffer a permanent solution to these unfortunate incidents in Opu Nembe (Bassambiri).

"We also want to use this medium to appeal to families of those killed in the unfortunate incident to please remain calm and allow peace to reign in the kingdom. We offer our heartfelt condolences to the families of the victims and call on all sons and daughters of Nembe to remain calm."