

4 killed as police, gunmen exchange fire in Anambra community

● 2 persons missing, 17 houses burnt in Enugu communal clash

By Nwabueze Okonkwo & Chinedu Adonu

FOUR persons were reportedly killed in a gun battle between gunmen and security operatives in Aguluzigbo community, Anaocha Local Government Area of Anambra State.

This came as two people have been declared missing and 17 houses burnt, while property worth millions of naira lost in a communal clash that ravaged the Ikolo community in Igbo-Etiti Local Government Area of Enugu State, yesterday.

It was gathered that the gun battle in Anambra community, which occurred early morning of yesterday, raged till the arrival of reinforcement of combined operatives, who repelled the attack.

Although the casualty figure was yet to be ascertained, a trending video showed that no fewer than four security operatives lost their lives in the fire exchange.

Contacted, the state police spokesperson, Tochukwu Ikenga, confirmed the incident but said he had yet to confirm the casualty figure.

Tension in Enugu

Members of the community, who wore gloomy faces alleged that over 50 youths from the neighbouring Aku community swooped in on them around 2a.m., yesterday, with guns, machetes and petrol bombs with which they set many houses on fire.

As a result, hundreds of women in the community, who protested against the attack, called on the state government to intervene as they were helpless in the face of the unprovoked carnage.

Some of the placards displayed by the protesting women, read: "Is Aku more than Enugu State Government?" "Enugu Government save Ikolo from Ogbons Idike", "Save our soul, our houses are burnt by Ogbons Idike," and "Save us from Aku people."

The leader of the protesting women, Florence Ekwueme, said many women in the community have been rendered homeless by the invaders, adding that the state government should urgently intervene to save the community.

She said: "Why we are crying is that we were sleeping in our houses around 1a.m., and 2a.m. when we heard gunshots. When we woke up, we noticed that some of buildings in the community had been burnt down. We are calling on the state government to come to the aid of our people. We are a small community and we don't have people. They always attack us, beat up our youths and lock them up at the police station. The certificates of our graduates have been burnt. We are calling on the state government to help us."



The protesting women.



One of the burnt houses.

The traditional ruler of Ikolo community, Gabriel Ezugwu, said the community had been locked in a long-standing land dispute which the state government has failed to resolve.

He said every November, his people experience severe attacks from Aku people, who are sponsored by a certain politician.

"This has been happening before. It has been a constant attack. Every November, they come to attack us. Sadly, all these things are happening, but the police have not made any arrest.

"Instead of arresting Aku people who are the aggressors, they will turn around and arrest our people. I called the neighbourhood watch and they were able to repel the attack. But, before then, 12 houses had been burnt

down, while five houses were destroyed."

A victim, Chukwuma Ugwuanyi, who is still nursing injuries from an earlier attack, said all his property had been razed by the attackers.

"I was attacked by Aku people some days ago and my head was cut in five places. I was at the hospital receiving treatment when I got a call around 2a.m., that my house was on fire. When I came here with my wife, I saw that the entire building had been burnt down. All my property gone. Nothing is left. We could not pick up anything because nobody was at home. I can't quantify what I have lost."

Another victim, Ibe Anastasia, who was in tears, said when she noticed that the

village was under attack, together with her children, they ran into the bush for safety.

When contacted, the accused person, the former Igbo-Etiti Local Government chairman, Ogbonna Idike, denied sending anybody to attack Ikolo community, adding that he was not from Lelegu Aku community that has land issue with Ikolo community.

Also, spokesman of the Enugu State Police Command, Daniel Ndukwe, when contacted, said he would verify the information and get back.

Police apprehend 3 over alleged robbery, rape of Ogun poly students

By James Ogunnaike

ABEOKUTA—Ogun State Police Command, yesterday, said it has arrested three persons in connection with the robbery and rape of some students of Gateway ICT Polytechnic, Saapade living at Ode Remo and Ipara in Remo North Local Government Area of the state.

Those arrested, according to a statement by the command Public Relations Officer, Omolola Odutola, are Taiwo Oredoyin, Taiwo Kuti and Folunsho Saheed.

They were reportedly arrested on November 27 during the