

#### **Killing of 2 travelling youths**

The duo, one of who only recently got married, were waylaid and allegedly killed, Monday by the Tiv youths on the Oju-Awajir road while traveling on motorbikes from Oju to Makurdi.

It was gathered that the killing of the close friends has escalated tension in that axis of the state after their bodies were recovered and taken home, forcing travellers, including students of the College of Education Oju to abandon the busy Oju-Aliade road.

It will be recalled that the Tiv and Iggede-speaking communities of the state have over the years been embroiled in bitter acrimony over ownership of disputed farmland which has defied moves by successive governments to have it resolved.

**Gov Alia issues 48 hours ultimatum to security agents**

Condemning the coldblooded murder of the two men, Governor Hyacinth Alia of the state in a statement by his Chief Press Secretary, Tersoo Kula also decried a separate attack on Nyifon community in Mbaikyongo Ward of Buruku council.

The incident was reportedly carried out by youths from the Mbayaka community in Kusuv, also of Buruku council, following a misunderstanding linked to a boat mishap.

The governor issued a 48-hour ultimatum to security agencies to fish out the masterminds of the two incidents. He described the two incidents, which happened separately in different councils of the state, as uncalled for and unfortunate, saying: "Nobody or group has the right to invade another community or inflict harm under any circumstance.

"He has directed the security agencies to move in, liaise with the traditional rulers of the areas concerned and ensure that they comb the vicinity thoroughly and within 48 hours, identify and apprehend the perpetrators of these heinous crimes to face the full wrath of the law."

According to the governor, "Benue is beginning to experience a level of security stability, and I will not tolerate any attempt by anyone regardless of their status or intentions to instigate unrest or threaten the peace we are working hard to sustain."

The governor reaffirmed his administration's commitment to protecting lives and property, and called on all communities across the state to remain peaceful and law-abiding while relevant security agencies carry out their investigations.

Reacting, the lawmaker representing Benue South senatorial district, and Senate Minority Leader, Senator Abba Moro, condemned the killing of the Igege youths describing it as barbaric and dastardly. The lawmaker in a statement by his Media Adviser, Emmanuel John, said he condemned “in the strongest terms, the brutal killing of two promising young men from Oju LGA by local militias in Gwer East LGA.” He also charged the Benue State Government to wade into the crisis ravaging the Gwer/Konshisha/Oju axis of the state with a view to putting to an end the killings and destruction of properties happening along that axis. Also, the Ito Youths Association, ITA, a body of Igede-speaking youths, who condemned the killing in a statement by its National President, Andrew Abi and Secretary, Ijoga Ipesi, lamented: “It’s an act that has once again shaken the fragile peace in our communities.