

Cross River communal conflict escalates, many killed including commercial driver



By Emma Una

CALABAR—MANY persons were reportedly killed, yesterday, in the raging communal dispute between the Ochon community in Obubra Local Government Area of Cross River State and their Alesi neighbours in Ikom Local Government Area of the state.

The conflict which has been raging for several weeks has left many people dead, houses set ablaze, farms destroyed and commercial activities grounded in both communities.

The crisis which escalated weekend, extended to yesterday when one of the feuding communities blocked the Ikom-Ugep highway and shot many commuters, including a commercial driver operating from Ikom-Calabar route.

“Angry youths from one of the communities blocked the Ikom-Calabar highway and set vehicles on fire and killed many people. One of the commercial drivers couldn’t escape and was shot and his vehicle destroyed,” said an eye witness.

According to the eyewitness, the driver is an indigene of Ugep in Yakurr Local Government Area of the state, which is far away from the crisis area.

“Two days ago, the youths blocked the road and intercepted a van conveying cocoa to Calabar. The driver escaped and the youths looted the cocoa and set the vehicle ablaze.

“Many people have become refugees particularly the Ochon people whose homes have been destroyed and businesses destroyed in the conflict,” the eye witness added.

Another source said the unless the government takes stern action, the conflict would continue to rage.

Few days ago, Mr. Linus Obogo, the Chief Press Secretary to the governor in a statement said military men have been despatched to the conflict area to maintain peace but appears not to have checked the conflict, as more lives have been lost to the crisis.

