

# Two soldiers murdered in Cross River youth clash

March 14, 2026 12:00 am



By Emem Julius

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Two soldiers have reportedly been killed during a violent clash between youths of Isabang and Alesi communities in Obubra Local Government Area of Cross River State.

Saturday PUNCH gathered that violence broke out on March 11 when a miner identified as Ibrahim Musa was allegedly beaten by youths at a village checkpoint and had his mined minerals seized.

According to a security analyst and counter-insurgency expert, Zagazola, Musa was said to have reported the attack to soldiers stationed at the 245 Battalion, Edor Barracks, near Jenifer Etuh's Hospital in Ochon.

It was learnt that troops who moved into the forest to make arrests were prevented by youths who blocked the access road and attacked the soldiers.

The soldiers allegedly fired gunshots, resulting in injuries to four persons, including Christopher Agara (27) and Ogobi Egbe (30), while two others were taken away for native treatment.

Two soldiers were also reportedly killed during the confrontation.

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Confirming the incident on Friday in Calabar, the Police Public Relations Officer in the state, Sunday Eitokpah, told Saturday PUNCH that the command had deployed a tactical team to handle the situation.

Eitokpah said investigations into the incident were ongoing and the command was working with relevant stakeholders to ensure peace in the affected communities, adding that further updates would be provided.

He said, “Preliminary information indicates that the incident followed a dispute between a miner, Ibrahim Musa, and some community youths at a checkpoint within the disputed area between Isabang and Alesi communities.

“The miner was allegedly assaulted and his mined minerals seized, after which he reported the matter to soldiers stationed around Ochon.

“In the course of attempting to arrest the suspects, some youths reportedly resisted and blocked the access road, leading to a confrontation during which four persons were shot. Two persons were fatally wounded, while two others sustained injuries and were taken for native treatment.

“There are also reports that two soldiers may have lost their lives during the incident. We have deployed our personnel and tactical teams to the area, and normalcy has been restored.”

**Emem Julius**