

# Tussle: One killed, 9 missing as thugs invade Obong's town

TOM MOSES, Calabar

THE tussle for the stool of Obong of Calabar, Cross River State, turned bloody yesterday with the murder of one person by some armed thugs, who allegedly invaded Cobham town, the home of the monarch, Edidem Bassey Ekpo Bassey II.

Sources said the attack, which took place at about 4 am, was carried out by thugs hired by a faction of Etuboms (kingmakers).

It was further gathered that the whereabouts of about nine members of the Cobham Town were unknown aside from the one confirmed dead.

Sources alleged that the nine persons may have been killed or kidnapped by the invaders, who also carried away the corpse of the deceased, whose identity could not be ascertained as at press time.

The attack took place despite the recent warning by the State Governor Liyel Imoke that government would not tolerate any form of violence again from those seeking to occupy the Efik throne.

"Contending parties are warned to maintain law and order in the pursuit of their interest and conduct themselves with decorum and dignity. Government will not hesitate to deal decisively with any person found to have breached the peace or conspiring to do same," Senator

Imoke had warned in a public announcement to the state.

The latest invasion of Cobham town was the fifth attempt to forcefully cap Etubom Otu at the Efe Asabo (kingship shrine) and the fourth time the community was being invaded since April 21.

When our Correspondent visited Cobham town at about 7am yesterday, the entire place was tensed up and the residents were gripped with fear. The people were seen in clusters discussing in low tones.

A few persons, who spoke to *Saturday Champion* on condition of anonymity, alleged that the thugs invaded the community from No. 7 Efanga Ansa Street, where they have been using as their base since the demise of the former Obong of Calabar, Edidem

(Prof) Nta Elijah Henshaw VI. They entered the community in the early hours of the morning and made straight for the kingship shrine where they met some of the guards who attempted to stop them from gaining entrance to stop the sacrilege of a second capping of another person as Obong.

Sources said in the ensuing melee, one of the shrine guards was killed by the thugs, who were armed with dangerous weapons and thereafter carried the corpse of the deceased away when it became obvious that the commotion at the shrine had alerted other members of the community, who immediately mobilized to ward off the aggressors.

## Court Okays secret trial for MEND leader

RAYMOND GUKAS, Jos

JUSTICE Steven Adah of the Federal High Court, Jos, Plateau state, yesterday ruled that the court would not allow public hearing into the felony charge preferred against Mr. Henry Okah by the federal government, saying that it would threaten national security.

This was in continuation of the arguments on whether the trial of Okah, leader of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger

Delta (MEND) should be held in camera as earlier ordered by a Federal High Court sitting in Abuja.

As usual, the atmosphere in court was tensed, and security tight. Federal government instituted a felony charge against Okah and his kinsman, Edward Atatah.

By 6:45am, police were all over the place to cordon off the area. The trial started as early as 9am and by 9.20am, the security men had come to fetch the press to the court room who were subjected to the rudiments of

49: ASUU must wait for