

2 Beheaded As Hostility Rages In Cross River Villages



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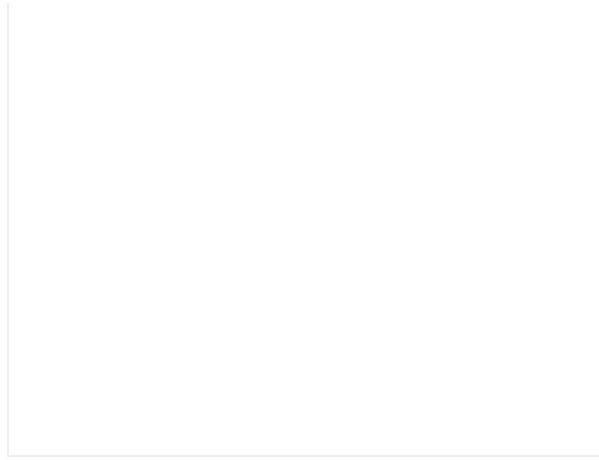


The chairman of Ofutop Traditional Rulers Council in Ikom Local Government Area, HRH Atun Bassey Okey, has raised the alarm over his safety after confirming that two of his subjects were recently beheaded in renewed communal clashes.

Deadly fighting broke out again last week between four Ikom communities – Ekukunela, Alesi, Agbragba and Okosoro – against their neighbours in Obubra LGA, namely Ochon, Odung and Okom.



The conflict, rooted in land disputes and encroachment claims, first erupted in 2016, flared up again in 2022, and has now resumed in 2025.



HRH Okey said his communities had lost at least five people since the fresh round of hostilities, two of them gruesomely beheaded.

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“Others were cooked and chewed as meat. The video recorded by the other communities is available for sighting,” he alleged.

The royal father further lamented that the killings were mostly carried out in ambushes within the forests, allegedly by the Mbembe people of Obubra.

“They hide in the bushes and launch attacks, abducting and butchering our people. Even my own personal safety is at stake due to direct threats to my person,” he said.

In response, youths of Ofutop clan are reportedly mounting surveillance across their 13 villages in a bid to forestall further attacks.

However, a representative of the Mbembe people, Chief Mbe Peter, dismissed the allegations, insisting that the Ofutop are settlers who have encroached on their ancestral lands.

“We’ve been under attack by the Ofutop people. We appeal to security agencies and the state government to come to our aid and shield us from these people who are killing us and laying claims to our lands,” he said.

The state government had earlier intervened through the deputy governor, Dr Peter Odey, who summoned leaders of the warring communities and directed them to engage surveyors of their choice to properly demarcate disputed boundaries.

This was after the Ofutop people rejected a previous survey report, which they described as biased in favour of the Mbembe and Okom groups.

“My people rejected that report despite presenting historical land documents and colonial maps. We saw injustice and could not accept it,” HRH Okey stressed, while appealing to the government to ensure a fair and lasting settlement.



As of press time, the Deputy Police Public Relations Officer, Igri Ewa, and the state security adviser, Maj.-Gen. Obono Ubi (rtd), had yet to react to the escalation of the crisis.