

Hostilities erupt in A'lbom, C'River communities days after peace moves

From Inemesit Akpan Nsoh, Uyo

EFFORTS by the federal government to bring lasting peace to the warring communities of Oku Iboku in Akwa Ibom State and Ikot Offiong in Cross River State may have suffered setback as suspected gunmen from Cross River allegedly resumed hostilities.

This is coming five days after officials of the Director General of the National Boundary Commission (NBC), Mohammad Bose Ahmad, and deputy governors of both states met at Itu Bridge to sensitise the people on the need for peaceful resolution of the lingering boundary crises.

Speaking with journalists yesterday in Uyo on behalf of Itu, Uruan and Ibiono

Ibom councils, Ekong Demson said unknown gunman from Cross River killed one Ifiok Udoh Ekpo while he was fishing along the Itu River.

He said during the meeting with representatives of the federal government that the two states were excited about the peace move, but wondered why Cross River people wanted to scuttle the arrangement.

"It is unbelievable that after the parley, the people of Ikot Offiong hired mercenaries from Cross River armed with sophisticated weapons and attacked defenseless fishermen along the Itu River, killing one Ifiok Ita Ekpo from Idu Uruan and seized several boats and fishing nets.

"We are not unmindful of the fact that key functionar-

ies of Cross River origin, both at the state and federal levels are sponsoring the mayhem in the peace loving Akwa Ibom State whose people are law abiding and engage in lawful economic activities in their territory.

"We, therefore, call on the federal government through the NBC to investigate the matter and bring the culprits to book otherwise we will be left with no option than to resort to self help," he said.

He explained that Ikot Offiong remained a recognised village in Itu local council of Akwa Ibom and warned that the elders would not tolerate any attempts by the community in alliance with officials of Cross River State government to cede the land to Cross River.