

Tension in Edo community over alleged killing of youths

By Otas Davidson, Benin City
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There is tension in Illushi Community, Esan South East Council of Edo State over the killing of some youths, as a company said to be investing in agriculture allegedly invited soldiers to the community over land issues.

The residents also accused one Samuel Offor of allegedly leasing 5,000 hectares of land to Skaff Agro Farms Limited without the people's consent and that he did so, while a case on the traditional stool was pending in court.

But in a swift reaction to the claims, Offor denied knowledge of the killings, adding that the people have been fighting him over his property, while Managing Director of the company, Anthony Skaff, denied the allegations leveled against him and the firm.

When contacted, the Public Relations Officer of 4 Brigade, Nigerian Army, Benin City, Major Ojo Adenegan, ended the call as soon as the subject matter was introduced and did not pick other calls.

However, speaking with journalists yesterday on the incident, Youth Leader of Illushi Community, Lucky Chibogwu, said the incident happened on April 13, 2021, at 3:00p.m., as soldiers shot, beat up some persons and killed three youths in the community.

Confirming Chibogwu's account, an aged resident of the community, Pa Richard Aghedo said: "On the fateful day, a truckload of soldiers came into our community and started shooting and beating everybody and before we knew it, three persons were shot dead.

"Even till now four of our youths are still missing. We didn't do anything and we didn't fight anybody. The company announced its presence in the community with brute force and I don't care attitude. They started by destroying communal shrines, homes and farms of our people. "

"As Skaff's bulldozers pulled down homes and destroyed 100 acres of pawpaw, banana, plantain and palm plantations and farms.

"The community lawyer at the time went to court to seek an injunction restraining the company from carrying on activities on the land in question pending the resolution of the dispute."



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