

# Armed men kill one, injure others in fresh Abia-Cross River border clash

By Bertram Nwannekanma

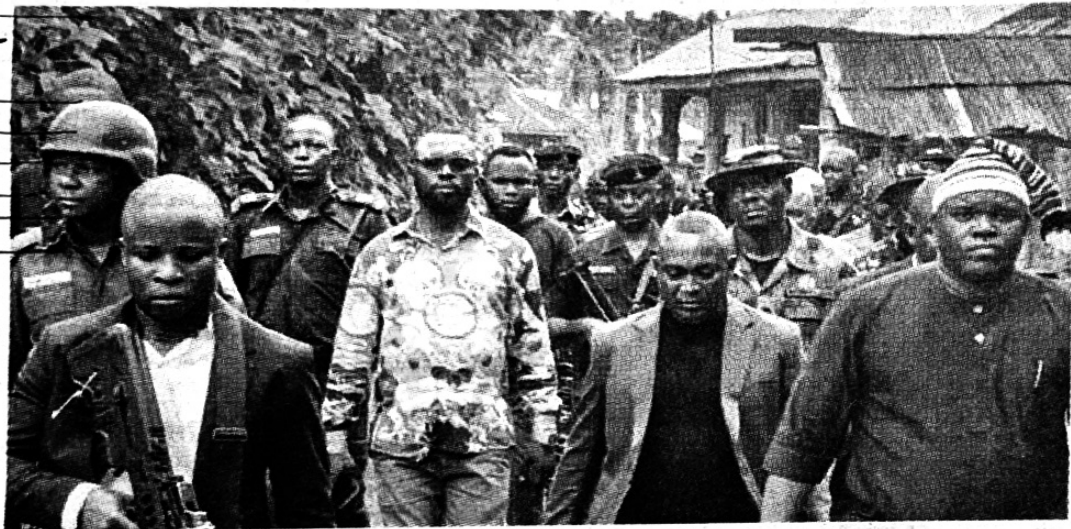
**ARMED** men suspected to have come from Ukwa Community in Cross River at the weekend killed a woman, Mrs Blessing Kalu Elem, and injured others during an alleged invasion of Isu community in Arochuku Local Council of Abia State.

Speaking on the issue, yesterday, President General of Isu community, Amara Kalu, said some people who ran into the bush during the raid remain unaccounted for. He said those who were wounded had been taken to different hospitals where they are currently being treated.

Kalu said the invaders struck from unexpected locations on Friday and Saturday. He said that while the victim was killed during the Friday raid, over 15 locals were maimed during Saturday's attack.

According to him, about 50

• Otti sues for peace, vows to protect life, property • Orders transfer of injured victims to hospital



Abia deputy governor, Emetu (2nd right), with others during the visit at Ike Isu community

members of Isu community have been killed since the border clash erupted in 2018. He alleged that the discovery of limestone in the area in commercial quantities might have made the neighbouring Cross River community to contest the ancestral land. Kalu stressed

that many villagers were rendered homeless, following a series of attacks by the Cross River neighbours. He lamented that the invaders went beyond the disputed area to lay claim on ancestral homes.

He said: "People who were displaced from the affected

villages have been living in Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camp under severe conditions. We have lost over 50 persons since 2018. Although this crisis has been in place since 1985 and 1995, when we clashed, none has lasted like the current case that began in 2018.

While we were planning for peace, we didn't know our neighbours were planning for war.

"Some of our people have lived in IDP camps since then, until they were dispatched to Ututu, Aro and Ihechiowa because no support came from any agency, and we were tired of supporting them. We appeal to the Federal Government to quickly intervene and bring permanent solution to the lingering border dispute by mandating the National Boundary Commission to clearly delineate the boundaries between the neighbouring communities."

He also appealed that a military or police base be sited in the area to ensure peace and implement the decisions of the commission.

**M**EANWHILE, Abia State governor, Alex Otti, has sued for peace and pledged his administration's com-

mitment to protect the life and property of citizens and residents.

He spoke during a visit to Isu to commiserate with the family of Mrs Blessing Kalu Elem, ascertain the extent of damage, and empathise with the people.

Represented by his deputy, Ikechukwu Lekwachi Emetu, the governor ordered the immediate transfer of gunshot victims to a specialist hospital for proper medical attention, saying the bills would be paid by the state government.

He said: "I have communicated with the government of Cross River State to call her people to order and stop further infiltration. I am saddened over this obnoxious act and enjoin you to remain calm as the government is working hand in glove with security agencies to ensure checkpoints are mounted at all entry points into Isu."