

# Killing Of Police Heightens Tension In Mgbowo Community

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As the report of the Judicial Panel of Inquiry into the 2006 civil disturbances in Mgbowo Community in Enugu State is still being awaited, fears of renewed violence in the community, has been sparked off by last Thursday's killing of Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) Chris Ekwo, who led the police team that restored calm in the area.

Five young men were killed allegedly by police bullets during the said civil unrest that witnessed the destruction of houses and property worth millions of naira belonging to some community leaders.

*Daily Independent* authoritatively learnt that some prominent indigenes of the town, especially those whose property were destroyed during the clashes are considering self exile, with reports of the killing of Ekwo by unknown gunmen around the One-day axis by Gariki, Agbani Road, Enugu.

A source that pleaded anonymity revealed that the affected indigenes are worried that with Ekwo out of the way, they were now at the mercy of their opponents, who were ready to stop at nothing to deal with them.

"I can confirm to you that some of our people will no longer visit the village, now that Ekwo is out of the way. We see him as messiah here. If not for

him, some people would have long been eliminated. He had contained the forces of evil in Mgbowo, who are bent on promoting criminality and now that he is no more, the coast is now clear for them," the source added.

It was further learnt that the slain cop had personally stopped alleged assassination attempt on the lives of some of the community leaders.

After the violent clashes that started on the day of a cultural festival, prominent indigenes of the community had petitioned then Inspector General of Police (IGP), Mr. Sunday Ehindero, protesting alleged acts of some policemen capable of breaching peace and order once again in

the community.

The petitioners drew attention of the IGP to the unprofessional conducts of Ekwo (now late), who they claimed had been causing confusion in the community with the larger than life image of himself, but whose basic interest according to them, is to hide under the veil of fighting robbers to assist a party in the Mgbowo crisis, to impose autonomous communities in the town, contrary to public outcry against the move.

But another group that wrote under the Mgbowo Autonomous Communities, which claimed that the crisis was sparked from criminality and not cultural festival, had given kudos to Enugu Police Command for commissioning a crack squad led by one Inspector Ekwo that eventually sacked armed robbers from the Awgu axis of Enugu/Onitsha expressway.