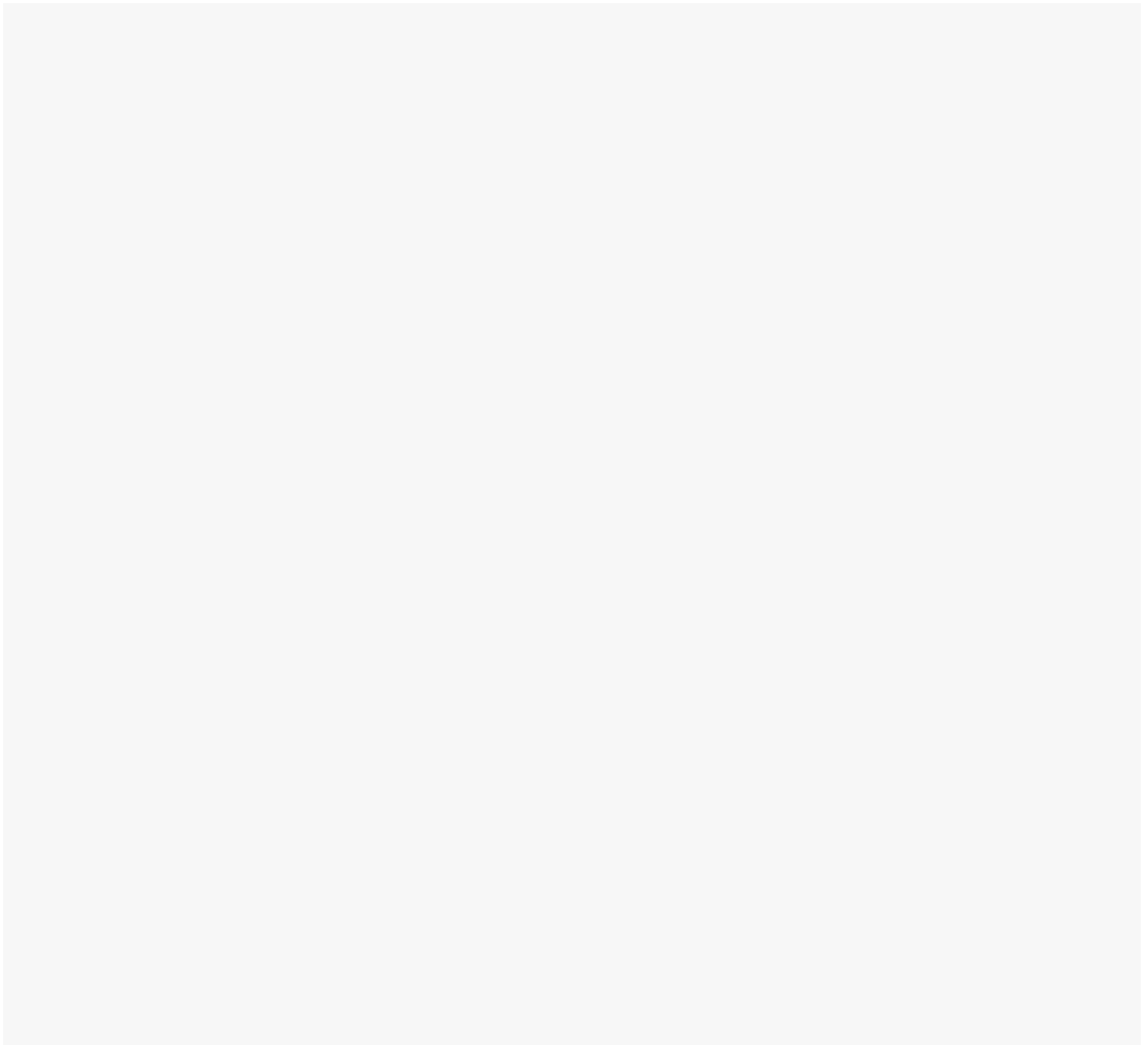


'Our border neighbours are killing us'



by **Our Reporter** February 22, 2019



The people of Isu community in Arochukwu Local Government Area, Abia State have cried out over alleged continued invasion and occupation of their land by their neighbours in Utuma community in Biase Local Government Area of Cross River State.

They alleged that Biase community has been sacking and occupying their community.

The aggrieved community was reacting to the recent murder of their son, Okoro Ukwaa and destruction of property worth millions of Naira in the community by suspected gunmen from the neighbouring Utuma community.

Speaking to newsmen, a former Secretary to the State Government (SSG) and Chief of Staff to former Governor Theodore Orji, Mazi Don Okorie accused the state government of total insensitivity to their plight.

Okorie said that since the attack on the community on April 18, 2018 which was done without any provocation by their neighbouring community and their cronies, Isu community has not known peace.

He said that the latest attack which happened on the February 15, 2019 claimed the life of one of their illustrious son Ukwaa, who was murdered in cold blood while he was at his farm.

The former SSG said, "The latest coldblooded murder in all intents and purposes is the most atrocious, devastating, and tragic, the clan is in a state of absolute melancholy, we want to use this medium to appeal to the government to come to our aid."

Okoro said that the attacks which has been consistent have left over 15,000 people from five different communities homeless, while farm lands have been left desolate. The absence of government intervention has made us to wonder if are still citizens of this state.

"As we speak, those people are still scattered across the area in various locations as Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) with their homes and farmlands abandoned without any hope of returning there soon."

He said that the situation the community has found themselves will have a serious effect during the forthcoming general election, stressing that it is time for the state government to take decisive action to save the situation in Isu land.

Okoro said that the invaders action may not be unconnected with their intention to annex the clan because of its large limestone deposit, explaining that the governments continued silence over their plight was not helping matters.

He said that the two warring communities have large deposits of limestone which Utuama have been tapping their own and are now desirous of annexing Isu community to boost their limestone production.

Explaining further about the communities, he insisted that, "The government has not given it enough time for it to stop. The people of Iheosu, Aba-Isu, Amachi-Isu, Ndi Ugbor, and Aliose are currently no

longer living in their home.”

The embattled clan proposed the establishing of a permanent police post in the clan to end the crisis before it escalates further, adding that they had made a formal complaint and written petitions over the matter to the police to no avail.

Okoro said that if government had taken action before now, “What has happened to our community and the killing of our great son would not have taken place, we are pleading that government should come over and help us.”

Similarly, a Special Adviser to Governor Okezie Ikpeazu, on Grassroots and Youth Mobilisation, Hon Tony Kalu, wondered why the government had kept quiet over the matter, decrying the neglect of the clan in terms of employment and development.

When contacted, the Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO) of the state command, SP Geoffrey Ogbonna said that the command is not aware of the recent killing of Ukwaa, stressing that they are aware of the tension in the area which they are handling.