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Policeman 'kills' youth leader in Abia over land

January 17, 2020 in [City Beats](#), [News Update](#)

Sunny Nwankwo, Aba

A YET-TO-BE identified policeman has allegedly killed Mr. Nwamaka Ogbuji, a youth leader of Umunwogu kindred in Ugwuati community, Ukwa West Local Government Area of Abia State.

It was gathered that the incident occurred when police officers accompanied government committee and surveyors to Ugwuati community to finalise the process of acquisition of land for Enyimba Economic City (EEC).

The killing of the community leader was said to have thrown residents into mourning.

Sources said that trouble started when Ogbuji and others refused to accept the take-over of their land by the government for EEC and other projects.

The Nation learnt that the community youths protested what land could be for an agrarian community, whose life was dependent on farming.

It was gathered that besides Ogbuji, who was shot in the head and died instantly, several people also sustained bullet wounds, with three victims said to be in critical conditions in unnamed hospitals.

“The youth, who were unarmed, had gathered at the hall to listen to the committee from the Abia State Government about the acquisition of land for the Enyimba Economic City.

“Due to how things are in Abia where promises end up in the mouth of the speaker without fulfilment, the youth told the delegation that they were not prepared to mortgage their lives for a project they did not understand.

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“It was when the arguments started becoming noisy that the police, who came with the government delegation, started shooting indiscriminately. Our people are not stupid. They didn’t fight anybody.

“They only refused to give out their land to people they don’t trust will make judicious use of it. Go to Obuaku City, you’ll see how parcels of land were acquired there years ago without any result.

“Now, they have come with this story of Enyimba Economic City, which we don’t believe is a serious thing. The people are even afraid that they may use our land for RUGA.

“You can’t just take away people’s land without their approval. After they killed the youth leader, everywhere was hot. So, their drivers escaped.

"The remaining persons hid in the houses of some government agents in the community and invited the soldiers to ensure their escape from the community," a source said.

The Coordinator of Centre for Youth Care and Human Rights Awareness (CYHRA), Mr. Chukwuemeka Mba, urged Governor Okezie Ikpeazu and the senator representing Abia South, Enyinnaya Abaribe, to investigate the incident and punish the culprits.

Police Commissioner Ene Okon confirmed the incident.

He claimed that the youth wanted to snatch a rifle from a policeman.

He said while protecting his gun from the youth, the policeman fired into the air, but the bullet strayed and hit one of the youth.

Information Commissioner Chief John Okiyi-Kalu told our reporter that the community leaders invited the officials of the EEC to survey portions of land in the area before the unfortunate incident.

He said: "We received the report of the incident involving workers of Enyimba Economic City (EEC), who were at Ugwuati community, on the invitation of community leaders, to survey portions of the land designated as part of EEC project.

"Our initial information is that members of the team were lured to a location and attacked by yet-to-be identified persons. In the process, one of them reportedly attempted to disarm a security agent and he was shot along with a second person.

"The matter is under investigation by the police and we await the report. It is important to note that proper agreements were reached with the local communities involved in the EEC project.

"The communities own shares in the company and the donation of land was voluntary. The government will take a position on the reported incident after receiving the police investigation report, but we regret the untimely loss of life of any citizen of Abia State.

"We pray God to grant the family the fortitude to bear the loss. We call on our people to avoid anything that will lead to violence. They are assured that the government will always protect their interest."