

Popular Ijaw musician, wife, friend die in auto crash

EBENEZER ADUROKIYA-WARRI

POPULAR Ijaw musician, Augustine Kemepadeak, his wife, Fortune and bosom friend, Okumagba Akieyefa, have died in a fatal road crash.

The trio lost their lives on New Year eve at 9.20

p.m.

The road crash occurred on the ever busy Delta Steel Company Expressway, Warri, Delta State.

The musician was aged 38 and his wife 35.

They were said to be returning from Aladja, a Warri suburb, where

they had gone to visit a friend in the spirit of the Yuletide.

They were said to have been advised by their host to pass the night with him, but the deceased insisted that they must return to Warri that night.

A witness said that the

vehicle, which was on top speed, rammed into an electric pole, shrinking it in the process.

It was gathered that early rescuers had applied machetes on the vehicle in order to remove the mangled bodies.

Meanwhile, the corpses of the dead have been deposited in the morgue of Warri Central Hospital.

Reacting to the incident, the National President, Ijaw Peoples Development Initiative, Comrade Austin Ozobo, described the death as a big blow to the Ijaw nation.

"It is a big blow to us because we cherish Augustine's musical style and humorous attitude. He was very good and accepted by all Ijaw people.

"It is sad and very unfortunate as no one expected that he would die in such a way. No doubt, his death has created a vacuum in Ijaw music industry, he said.

Meanwhile, sympathisers have been trooping to the residences of the deceased to sympathise with their families.

National confab must address structural imbalance —Idika Kalu

FORMER Minister of Finance and National Development, Kalu Idika Kalu, said on Thursday that the proposed National Conference should have the capacity to address obvious imbalance in the country.

Kalu said this in an interview with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) at his country home in Ebem Ohafia, Abia State.

He said that President Goodluck Jonathan had taken the right step in ensuring that Nigerians come together with a view to addressing some of the teething problems in the country.

He called on all ethnic nationalities as well as

politicians, irrespective of party affiliations, to embrace the dialogue, which he said was in the best interest of the nation.

"Whether as governors, senators, president or members of the House, let's take a new look at the structure that is going to give this nation maximum growth and development.

"We can delay the elections a little bit to restructure and bring about a system that will promote growth. That is more important than rushing to another election.

"Nigerians need to sit down and talk because we are having problems all

over the place. So let's sit down and talk about the framework that will make Nigeria work," he said.

Kalu said that the country would be more viable if the framework of restructuring the country was based on the local government system.

He said that after restructuring at that level, "we can then decide what states we want.

"It's a radical idea but the basic criterion is that we really come to the national conference with an open mind to say yes this is our country.

"Let's use this opportunity, let's not waste this opportunity because of party politics," Kalu said.