

# Tension Mounts In Edo Community Over Killings Of Youths

By Suyi Ayodele - Benin On May 20, 2021

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Palpable tension on Thursday enveloped the agrarian community in Illushi, Esan South East Local Government Area of Edo State, over the alleged killing of some youths by soldiers, said to have been brought to the community by a company allegedly venturing into agriculture in the area.

The community also accused one Samuel Offor of leasing 5,000 hectares of their land to the company identified as Skaff Agro Farms Limited, without the consent of the people while a traditional rulership tussle was still pending in court.

In his reaction to the allegation, Offor said he knew nothing about the killings and that the people had been fighting him over his property, just as the Managing Director of the company, Anthony Skaff, debunked all the allegations levelled against him and his company.

When contacted, the Public Relations Officer, 4 Brigade Nigeria Army, Major Ojo Adenegan, aborted the call immediately the subject matter was introduced and did not pick repeated calls made to him thereafter.

Youth Leader of Illushi, Mr Lucky Chibogwu, addressing newsmen on Thursday said, the incident happened on April 13, at about 3 pm as soldiers came into the community, shooting, beating up people and leaving three persons dead.

Corroborating the account, Pa Richard Aghedo, said that on a fateful day, “A truckload of soldiers came into our community and started shooting and beating everybody before we knew it, three persons were shot dead, even till now four of our youths are still missing. We didn’t do anything, we didn’t fight them.”

“Skaff Company announced its presence in the community with brute force and I-don’t-care attitude. They started by destroying communal shrines, homes, and farms of community members. As farms and homes were going down by Skaff’s bulldozers, including 100s of acres of pawpaw, banana, plantain and palm plantations were also destroyed.

“The community through its lawyer at the time approached the court seeking an injunction restraining Skaff from carrying on activities on the land in question pending when the dispute is resolved”, Aghedo added.