

Scores feared killed as youths, soldiers clash in Imo community

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SEVERAL people have reportedly been killed after youths clashed with soldiers from the 34 Artillery Brigade, Obinze, at Izombe, in Oguta Local Government Area of Imo State.

Nigerian Tribune gathered that the incident occurred on Monday after soldiers were drafted to the community to curb youth restiveness in the area.

Some gunmen had two days ago attacked and killed a truck driver, which prompted increased patrol of the area by soldiers.

However, it was learnt that the gunmen attacked the soldiers' patrol team on Monday, which resulted in exchange of gunfire.

A native of the area who spoke with the *Nigerian Tribune* on the condition of anonymity confirmed the

incident, adding that the soldiers just invaded the community and started shooting sporadically.

However, when contacted, spokesperson for 34 Artillery Brigade, Captain Joseph Akubo, denied soldiers invaded the community.

Captain Akubo said it was youths of the community who attacked the soldiers who were on normal routine patrol following increased criminal activities in the area.

Akubo said he was yet to ascertain the casualty figure as the youth were still engaging soldiers in fierce gun battle.

He said: "The soldiers were on routine patrol in the area when they came under attack by armed youths.

"Two days ago, a Dangote truck driver was killed, coupled with other criminal activities, which necessitated increased patrol. So as the soldiers were on normal exercise, they came under attack from the youth."