

Youths kill pastor, two others over land dispute



•The slain men. Photo: Mudiaga Affe

Mudiaga Affe, Calabar

Members of Faith Builders Ministry, a Pentecostal church located in Calabar Municipal Council of Cross River State, have been thrown into mourning following the death of their pastor and founder, Rev. John Ene-Obong, who was killed last Monday by irate youths over a land dispute in Ikot Ene-Obong community.

Ene-Obong, who reportedly returned to Nigeria from Canada barely a week before his death, was killed alongside two others whose names were given as Effiong Koko-Ette and Victor Ene-Boco.

PUNCH Metro gathered that the disputed land belongs to the family of the slain pastor.

It was further learnt that the pastor and two others might have been killed to avenge killing of one Eton, who was killed on the same farmland.

Eton, our correspondent learnt, was accused of maiming another man identified simply as Effiong.

Effiong, who was said to be a victim of the protracted land dispute, has been amputated on one of his legs following injury sustained when he was shot.

On the latest killings, a source told our correspondent that the pastor went to inspect the land in company with the two other victims when they were ambushed and killed.

Residents of Ikot Ene-Obong community and its environs are now living in fear following the war of attrition the land dispute had caused among members of late Chief Ene-Obong's family.

It was learnt that the land dispute had polarised the family and factions within Ene-Obong's family now resorted to use of thugs to intimidate one another.

A member of the family and former chairman of

Calabar Municipality Local Government Area, Mr. Willy Okokon, confirmed the pastor's death.

He said it was painful and unfortunate the way things had turned out, adding that the family would soon come out with burial plans.

When contacted, the state Police Public Relations Officer, Mr. John Umoh, said six persons had been arrested in connection with the killings.

Umoh, who stated that investigation was ongoing on

the matter, however, added that the principal suspect was still at large.

He said, "The state Criminal Investigation Department has taken over the matter. Six persons have so far been arrested in connection with the killings.

"There is one principal suspect that is still at large. However, those arrested are still in our custody and we will not release them until investigations have been concluded."

FRSC inaugurates new commercial driving licence

Etim Ekpimah, Uyo

The Akwa Ibom State Sector Command of the Federal Road Safety Corps has inaugurated the new commercial driving licence in Uyo.

The state Sector Commander, FRSC, Mr. Fidelis Osakwe, who was represented by Emmanuel Onuoha, said before the new driving licence is issued to any applicant, the applicant must have attended government certified/approved driving schools.

Besides, he said the applicant must also have medical test conducted in any government hospital.

He said, "Applicants for commercial driving licence must obtain an identification letter from their unions, (NURTW, RTEAN and NARTO) fleet operators, agencies or government as the case may be."

He stated that the process was in line with global best practices aimed at ensuring that only those trained and certified were issued the licence.

Osakwe warned that any other process rather than the prescribed procedure would be ignored.

Chairman of the state Board of Internal Revenue, Mr. Joseph Okon, said road safety was a collective responsibility of all.

He advised the drivers to be careful and mindful of their lives as well as those of their passengers, whenever they were driving.

Okon said, "I want to advise that from now on that this programme is being launched, do not patronise touts.

"The system is so bad; the touts can front as road safety personnel to give you fake driving licence. I commend the Federal Government for initiating this programme. Do not make calls when you are driving, it is a very serious offence.

"I urge the sector get towing van as breakdown vehicles on the road frequently cause accidents.

"I implore road safety officials not to be aggressive; they should offer assistance to those who are in need."