Heavy shooting in Ebonyi, two killed in boundary dispute

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Ebonyi State Commissioner of Police Aliyu Garba

MOVEMENT of vehicles and passengers along the Enugu-Abakaliki Expressway was halted on Tuesday following heavy shooting at the Ezilo axis of the highway by suspected gunmen.

As of the time of filing this report, it was not immediately clear those responsible for the indiscriminate shooting.

The governor, David, Umahi, had earlier said two persons were killed in a renewed boundary dispute between Eziulo community and its neighbouring Iyionu community in the Ohaukwu Local Government Area of Ebonyi State.

He expressed dismay at the role played in the crisis by the councillor representing the area.

"The government committee working on the land dispute was on the verge of resolving the dispute, having declared the disputed land as buffer zone. But the councillor took some foreign investors to the land and this led to shootings during which two persons died," Umahi said.

The governor, who expressed displeasure over the development, ordered the arrest of the councillor.

However, it could not be immediately established if the shooting was connected with the dispute.

A passenger from Enugu, who was billed for Abakaliki, Afam Cyprian, told The PUNCH that travellers had been stranded at Okpoto for about one hour.

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He said military patrol vans were patrolling the highway, but had told them not to advance.

"Many people are looking for another route to take. Some have gone back to take Afikpo road. I am looking for a way to go back to Abakaliki," he said.

The Police Public Relations Officer in the state, Mrs Loveth Odah, confirmed the shooting along the said highway.

Odah said the Police Commissioner in the state, Aliyu Garba, had dispatched police patrol teams to restore peace and open up the road for users.

She, however, said the shooting was not related to the boundary dispute as "the disputed area is not close to the highway."