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BY JUDEX OKORO, CALABAR ON APRIL 26, 2014 ·

COVER

Barley a week after about 15 persons were reportedly killed in a clash between Ediba and Usumutong communities in Abi, **eight persons are again feared dead while about 15 are reported to have suffered gunshotwounds in Obudu local government of Cross River over the ownership for a parcel of farm land.**

For two years now, the **Okworotong and Kutia communities in Obudu have been at war over the ownership of a piece of land housing residential buildings and a church allegedly belonging to Kutia people.**

Trouble was said to have started in 2011 when Okworotong people came up and claimed that the Kutias encroached on their land and demanded they vacate the land within a specific period of time.

This development led to communal war between the communities, leading to loss of lives and destruction of property including public school.

To prevent further blood shed, the state government intervened and took over the disputed land while ordering the warring neighbours to steer clear of the area pending when the matter will be resolved amicably.

However, investigations by Saturday Sun revealed that three years after when it appeared there was no response from government, the Kutia people went back to same land and started rebuilding with the belief that all is over.

On discovering what was taking place, it was learnt, their Okworotong brothers sent emissaries to find out why they were rebuilding without permission from the state government, and this later resulted into a physical fight.

**An eye-witness account told Saturday Sun that during the clash on Tuesday, the Kutia people were**

beaten black and blue with some of them sustaining various degrees of injuries while five were said to

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have been killed.

The account said "in annoyance the Kutia people went home; re-grouped and armed with sophisticated weapons attacked their Okworotong brothers and killed three and wounded many."

As at the time of filling this report, the situation was said to have degenerated into a full scale war with the warring parties unleashing mayhem on one another.

Thousands of women and children are said to have been evacuated to other communities for safety.

Reliable sources told our correspondent that due to the escalation of the crisis, the local government chairman, Mr. Emmanuel Ugbe, had summoned a meeting of stakeholders including political office holders, traditional rulers, youth leaders and women groups and business class with a view to finding lasting solution to the dispute.

Speaking to newsmen on the crisis, the Director-General of State Border Commission, Barr. Leo Aggrey, said he received a text message from the Community Relations Officer in the area, Chief Mathias Ake, informing him of the clash.

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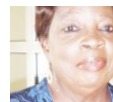
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