

BY VINCENT KALU

BUT for the timely intervention and wise counsel of the elders of Amaekpu community in Ohafia, Abia State, crisis of unimaginable proportion could have erupted between the youths of the community and the police division in the area, following the alleged killing of Chief Kalu Nnoke, alias Croska, leader of the hunters group by the police, who came to his house in search of guns.

Trouble started at about 4.50am on September 15, when a team of policemen in two operation vans stormed the Uku Amoba residence of Croska, who was in his late 60s, in search of guns and also to arrest him. That mission turned fatal, as his corpse is currently lying in the morgue.

Speaking with Saturday Sun, first son of the deceased, Emeka, narrated what transpired that early morning on the fateful day. According to him, at about 4.50am, his father called him, and from the tone of his voice, he knew danger lurked around, and so, woke up immediately and headed towards his room, and was terrified to see an armed policeman by the door of his dad's room.

His words: "At the entrance to his room, a policeman was standing there with a gun. At first I was confused and made attempt to pass the policeman to meet my dad in his room, but the policeman threatened me with the gun and didn't allow me to enter the room, as he barricaded the door.

"By then, I was hearing my father's voice with another man. When I looked in, I saw another armed policeman with him, and I was hearing him speaking harshly to my dad to produce the guns, after he had already turned the room upside down searching for gun, which he used for hunting.

"Probably out of frustration that he didn't see any gun, he was dragging my dad and also beating him. I was hearing him groaning, until when he shouted that the policeman has hit him on the chest with the butt of his gun, and he slumped.

"Attempts I made to enter the room were resisted by the other policeman at the door, who again threatened me with his gun. When the policeman inside saw that my dad had slumped, he tried to lift him, but he found out he was passing out, he rushed out from the room and told his colleague at the door, 'lets go, let's leave here quickly', and I ran after them.

"I saw there were two Toyota Hilux vans outside and they jumped into them and ordered the drivers to zoom off immediately. When I came back I saw my father lying lifeless".

Emeka, who is about 20, said in that state of confusion, he went to their next-door neighbour, Mr. Wembley and woke him up with the story of how policemen had killed his father minutes ago. Wembley's wife, he said, is also his father's niece. Wembley brought his car, and they rushed Croska to the hospital where the doctor confirmed him dead.

They went to Ohafia Divisional Police Station to report the matter. At the station, the personnel they saw at the charge room office told them that they were on morning duty, and that those on night duty had closed, advising them to wait for the Divisional Police Officer (DPO), who should know those

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