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C'River, Ebonyi border clashes claim 13, as Obubra women protest killings

FROM: JUDEX OKORO,
CALABAR

TV),
here

THIRTEEN persons have been reportedly killed with scores injured in a renewed inter boundary dispute between the people of Osopong clan in Obubra Local Government Area of Cross River and Izzi community of Ebonyi State.

Investigations by Saturday Sun revealed that in the last couple of years, all the Cross River border communities including, Itigidi, Ikureku, Obubra, Adadama, Ukele and Yala, had to fight bloody battles with Ebonyi to protect their farmlands.

Hostilities broke out again two weeks ago between the Idia and Okpetumor communities in Izzi and Ofonekom, Ogamana, Idoru Ofonmana and Igitum in Osopong, Obubra following the invasion of the disputed land by the former communities.

The Ebonyi neighbouring communities were said to have ignored all the signposts indicating boundary lines within riverine communities and moved on to hoist its flag in Obubra communities to show ownership of the land.

Piqued by the invasion, the Obubra communities were said to have mobilised to push back the Izzi warriors and during the clash five persons from Osopong were hacked down by their Izzi neighbours, who were said to have ambushed them.

Not relenting, the Obubra people again sent their youths last weekend to reclaim the land, which Izzi fighters hoisted their flag as a mark of victory.

It was learnt that though

the youths of Obubra succeeded in pushing out the Izzi from the land, they subsequently lost four youths again in the fight.

A community source disclosed that early in the week, the Izzi people launched another attack on Ogamana community killing four persons, bring the number of casualties to 13.

The current clash has led to the destruction of properties worth millions of naira, just as the invaders have also destroyed farms and crops.

Eyewitness Augustine Agbo, from Idoru Ofonmana, said: "Armed men with automatic weapons from Izzi invaded our community and took possession of our farmland from Thursday to Sunday last week destroying the about five villages.

"The people of Idia and Okpetumor both in Ebonyi State mobilised armed men with automatic weapons with the instructions to kill anybody on sight, destroy property as they ambush the affected Obubra communities. As I am talking with you, about eight people have been killed, while scores have been wounded and rushed to Calabar for treatment.

"They have been able to cause havoc in four Obubra villages - Ofonekom, Ogamana, Idoru Ofonmana, Igitum and Ogurude. We have become refugees in our land."

Another witness, Mrs. Agatha Obasse, said: "Young men and businessmen have deserted the communities. Only women and children are left at home, the youths are in the bush fighting to protect the communities. This has been on for about two weeks now.