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Police kill youth leader in Abia

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Okey Sampson, Umuahia

Ugwuati community in Ukwa West Local Government of Abia State was on Wednesday thrown into mourning following the shooting to death of a youth leader, Nwamaka

Ogbuji, by policemen attached to Abia State Government Committee and Surveyors for land acquisition for the Enyimba Economic City (EEC) project.

It was gathered that the state government committee visited Ugwuati community to finalise agreements for the acquisition of land for the much-talked-about EEC and Ogbuji was said to have attended the meeting held between the committee and members of his community.

Trouble started when Ogbuji and the rest of the youths refused to accept the takeover of their land for whatever reason, stressing that they were farmers and would not afford to take such risk.

A source told Daily Sun that apart from Ogbuji who died instantly after he was shot in the head, other youths sustained bullet wounds. Three of the victims were said to be in critical conditions.

According to the source: “The youths were unarmed, they gathered at the village hall to listen to the committee from Abia State Government on the acquisition of land for the Enyimba Economic City.

“The youths vehemently refused to give out their land for the project saying that since they are farmers that would amount to mortgaging the future of their children”.

The source further stated that at a point, the meeting became very rowdy, tensed up and to control the situation, the policemen on ground fired indiscriminately to disperse the youth and bullets hit some of them.

After the killing, tension rose very high, so, soldiers were drafted to the community to ensure that the committee members were escorted out of the area unharmed.

“You can’t just take away people’s land without their approval. When they finished killing the youth leader, everywhere was hot so, their drivers drove away and escaped, the remaining persons hid in the houses of some government agents in the community and invited the soldiers to ensure they were not harmed in the community”, said the source.

The coordinator, Centre for Youth Care and Human Rights Awareness (CYHRA), Mr. Chukwuemeka Mba, called on the State governor, Dr. Okezie Ikpeazu, to investigate the matter and punish those responsible for the killing and shooting of others.

John Okiyi-Kalu, in a telephone interview, said the staff of the EEC to survey portions of land in

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“Our initial information was that members of the team were lured to a location and attacked by yet to be identified persons.

“In the process one of them reportedly attempted to disarm a security agent and he was shot along with a second person”, he said.

Abia State Commissioner of Police, Ene Okon, confirmed the incident, but stressed that something happened before the police officers opened fire.

Explaining further, Okon said, “Last week, the state government wrote to us and asked us to bring some security to accompany Enyimba Economic City Committee to go to that place.

“The police men were sent as requested by the State government. If the community had a problem, they should have sorted it out among themselves”, Okon said .

Okon said the police did not shoot the youths deliberately but that they (youths) attacked the police and some of them wanted to snatch the riffles from the policemen and as they were struggling, the riffle fired and the bullet strayed and killed one of them while two person were injured.

He said he had to send re-enforcement to rescue three members of the committee that they abducted.

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