

# Abia/Akwa Ibom boundary clash: 1 soldier, 16 others killed, 6 missing

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From Okey Sampson, *Umuahia*

**One soldier and 16 natives of Ariam Usaka clan in Ikwuano Local Government of Abia State have been killed in the fratricidal boundary clash between the Ariam Usaka people and their Nkari neighbours in Akwa Ibom State, while six others are missing.**

Disclosing this during a stakeholders meeting of the affected communities including traditional rulers, town union presidents, and the Chairman of Ikwuano council, Chief Steve Mpamugo, under the auspices of Ariam Usaka Professionals and Ariam Usaka Development Union; President General of Usaka Ukwu

Development Union, Chief Boniface Mgbaramuko, said the present clash started from May 2020 to January 22, 2021, when the Nkari people invaded farmlands belonging to the Usaka Ukwu community and murdered 16 people without provocation.

Mgbaramuko alleged that on January 22, 2021, the Nkari people ambushed and killed one of the three soldiers who were alerted to the crisis and seized their rifles and vehicle.

“We have lost 16 people during the attack spanning this period by the Nkari people; six are still missing. Five persons were killed at Ndiorie; they skinned one of them alive and danced round with his head. The latest clash started in May 2020 to January 22, 2021. On May 20, Usaka Ukwu indigenes went to their farms at Igbata and were attacked by armed indigenes of Ibono Okporo Nkari. They killed one Peter Uwaechehi Ugorji and shot five other persons. Ugorji’s corpse was recovered and still kept at the morgue till date”.

Dismissing the allegation by the Nkari people that they were the ones killed by the Ariam Usaka natives, Mgbaramuko said, “They are not saying the truth; the Chairman of Ini LGA apologized for the killing of Ugorji and even promised that the perpetrator will be fished out while the local government will assist in the burial.

“When the one of January 22, 2021 crisis started, the Usaka Ukwu people alerted the Army to intervene. But when the Army came, the Nkari people ambushed them and killed one of the soldiers. The unbelievable happened in when Usaka Ukwu indigenes namely Iroegbulam Isaac, Boniface Ugwunna and Iheanacho Orioha went to their ancestral farm land at a place called Oji and Ala-Oku, some people from Ibono Okporo Nkari apprehended and beheaded them and their corpse taken to Nkari community. The issue of unprovoked attack and the calculated moves to grab our lands across the land border of Ikwuano LGA(Usaka Ukwu, Ndiories, Ariam Elu Elu , Ekpiri Ala Ala, Obugwu, Ekwelu and Azunchai) by the people of Ini and Obot Akara LGAs has now intensified to the point where they want to push us out of our ancestors.

“The most annoying aspect of this greedy expansionist agenda of the Akwa Ibomites is the criminal reference and surveying of the Nigerian Army camp sited at the farm lands of Obugwu people in Ikwuano LGA. These community lands of Obugwu, which extends from Ekwelu Ariam Elu Elu to and across the

Umuahia- Ikot Ekpene road to Utu in Akwa Ibom was a subject of litigation in the 1950s and which appeal was won by our brothers from Obugwu”, he said.

The Chairman of Ikwuano council, Chief Mpamaugo who explained that the land belongs to the Ikwuano communities, disclosed that the Abia State Deputy Governor, Sir Ude Oko Chukwu, has held series of meetings to resolve the lingering crisis and urged the National Boundary Commission, NBC, to make haste to delineate the border to save lives and properties in the area.