

Panic in Bayelsa as gunmen kill monarch, CDC chairman

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From **Femi Folaranmi**, Yenagoa

Panic has engulfed the Kalaba community in Yenagoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa State, over the killing of the Paramount Ruler, Chief Francis Kolubo, and the Community Development Committee (CDC) Chairman, Samuel Oburo, by gunmen.

The community has been enmeshed in a lingering chieftaincy tussle linked to plans by some suspected crude oil thieves to set up a bunkering camp in the area.

Kolubo was kidnapped from his palace last Sunday, and whisked away to an unknown destination. His body was discovered yesterday morning, at the community swamp, with several machete cuts, suggesting that he had been tortured.

Oburo, on the other hand, was said to have been dragged out of his room to the backyard by gunmen, where he was brutally murdered.

Investigations revealed that the deceased were having a running battle with some prominent people in the community, over the plans to set up an illegal oil refinery camp in the bushes bordering Kalaba and Ikarama community, but which they resisted.

Sources said the battle later shifted to dispute over the control of surveillance contracts of pipeline of Nigerian Agip Oil Company (NAOC), which was withdrawn from those handling it before, and given to the deceased Kolubo and Oburo.

A source said many people in the community saw the danger brewing for the paramount ruler and the CDC chairman, but the duo insisted that they could not be harmed.

“So, on Monday, the community woke up to the story that our paramount ruler had been kidnapped by some gunmen at about 3am, in his palace. We were all shocked and confused about what may have led to his abduction.

“That same day, the CDC chairman travelled to Yenagoa, the state capital, to officially report the incident to the police. While he was there, information came to some members of the community that the gang saw the CDC chairman in Yenagoa, while he was reporting the incident to the police, and that they had sent some gunmen to lay ambush at his house.

“When he drove into town, he was informed about this plot and advised not to enter the community, but he refused. He said no harm would come to him. As he drove into the community, a popular pastor stopped him along the road and pleaded with him to take a back road that would lead him out of the community.

“This time he still refused to take the advice. Just as the gang had planned, the moment he got to his house about 7pm, some men armed with guns and machete came out from hiding and dragged him to his backyard where they murdered him,” the source said

The spokesman of the Bayelsa State Police Command, Asinim Butswat, confirmed the incident and said the body of the monarch was found at Ikarama community, and that the police were investigating the development.