

# Brothers at war: Man beheaded as Boje, Isobendegehe renew crises in Cross River

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From Aniekan Aniekan, Calabar

**In a devastating turn of events, the fragile peace between the Boje and Isobendegehe communities in Boki Local Government Area of Cross River State has shattered again.**

The crisis has lingered for decades and centres around portions of land in dispute and claimed by each community.



**Beatrice**



**•Obi**

The renewed crisis has left a trail of destruction, deaths and despair in its wake and has again highlighted the precarious relationship between both communities.

Boje is the capital of Boki LGA and is blessed with mountains, while its neighbour, Isobendegehe, has table lands. Both communities are known for their rich cultural heritage and warm hospitality but are now grappling with the aftermath of violent clashes that have sparked widespread outrage and condemnation.



**Ikpong**



**Ayambem**

The two communities were noted for huge production of agricultural products, particularly cocoa, but the age-long crisis over land has dented the agricultural might of the area.

The number of victims of the latest clashes remain in the realm of speculation but it has sparked an outpouring of grief, anger and frustration, with stakeholders calling for peace and restraint.

Tension remains high and fear of further violence lingers. But one question remains: what next for Boje and Isobendegehe?

As the situation continues to unfold, stakeholders are speaking out against the crisis. Hon. Bette Philip Obi, member representing Boki I State Constituency, through a motion of urgent importance, told the House that the ongoing land dispute between the neighboring communities has degenerated badly.

Obi said: “The land in question is officially designated as a government reserve land and, therefore, cannot be legally claimed by either community.

“The conflict has led to several casualties, including the beheading of a man from Boje, and if immediate action is not taken, the violence could spiral into a full-scale communal war.”

The Speaker of the House of Assembly, Hon. Elvert Ayambem, totally condemned the violence, describing the incident as “barbaric and unacceptable.”

He said: “No community disagreement should ever result in bloodshed. This House will not tolerate the needless killing of innocent people.”

Similarly, Beatrice Etta Nyiam, the chairman of Boki LGA, condemned the escalation of violence between the two communities.

She said: “This latest outbreak of violence is both regrettable and unacceptable, especially in the light of the concerted and sustained efforts by the Boki local government council to foster peace between the two neighbouring communities.

“These efforts include multiple high-level peace meetings with the state security adviser, consultations with security agencies, the signing of a peace accord and a critical dialogue facilitated by the council held at the palace of the paramount ruler of Boki at Olum.”

She said those found culpable in inciting or executing these acts of violence will face the full wrath of the law, as lawlessness has no place in Boki.

The Cross River State government, on its part, also condemned the sad outbreak of bloody communal hostilities between the brother-communities of Boje and Isobendeghe.

The commissioner for information, Erasmus Ekpang, said: “This unfortunate resurgence of violent communal clashes between these two brothers is coming on the heels of deep-spirited efforts to nip in the bud this dispute over a piece of farmland.

“Gov. Bassey Edet Otu is saddened by this dastardly incident in spite of initial steps taken by relevant government agencies, including the office of the senior state security adviser, the state commissioner of police, office of the state surveyor general, the chairman of Boki Local Government Area as well as clan heads and other traditional rulers from both communities.

“Several meetings were held and consultations with all relevant stakeholders were made with a view to reaching an amicable resolution of the conflict. In fact, findings were to have been submitted on June 26, 2025, before the unfortunate outbreak of hostilities.”

The state government subsequently directed all parties in the dispute to sheathe their swords and go back to the dialogue table for peaceful resolution of the conflict.

The crisis in Boje and Isobendeghe is a wake-up call for all stakeholders to prioritize peace and dialogue. The government, community leaders and residents must work together to address the underlying issues and find a lasting solution to the conflict, ensuring that the communities can live in harmony and prosperity.