

## Seven fishermen killed in A'lbom-C'River communal crisis

Tony Anichebe  
UYO

At least seven people have been killed in fresh outbreak of violence in the protracted communal war between two neighbouring communities of Oku Iboku in Itu Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State and Ikot Offiong in Odukpani Local Government Area of Cross River State.

The age-long dispute over the ownership of some fishing communities on the bounds of Calabar-Itu River, according to Chief Effiong Eneh, a local fish merchant, "has defied all known traditional and political solutions even before the creation of Akwa Ibom State out of the old Cross River in 1967".

He said the incident, which he described as sad, happened late Tuesday night.

Eneh explained that "the deceased left for their fishing business about 10a.m."

He said: "Those killed were all from Oku Iboku including three brothers from same parents. Three bodies have been recovered so far."

According to him, youths are still waiting for the remains of the other four to float to the sea shore.

Bemoaning the incident, Bassey Offiong Williams, a native of the neighbouring Ayadehe community, told journalists that "because of the crises which have claimed several lives, people were warned not to go deep into the sea for fishing".

Eneh blamed soldiers standing guard around the troubled river for the problem.

"The soldiers always allow the militants from Ikot Offiong to penetrate into our territory with their flying boats but would not allow Oku Iboku fishermen to do same," he alleged.

Mr. Elukere Umoh, Chief Press Secretary (CPS) to the Deputy Governor, Obong Moses Ekpo, whose office oversees boundary issues involving states, said he was yet to be fully briefed on the incident.

Confirming the incident, the state Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), SP Odiko Macdon, said "we have already commenced preliminary investigation into the incident".

Macdon suggested "pro-active measures by politicians and security agencies to bring a lasting peace to the crises."

"I think politicians should come up with a political solution to the problem," he said.



Gunmen

## Mutilated bod