

Communal conflict over land dispute claims one in Ebonyi

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ABAKALIKI

Body of a 53-year-old man, Joseph Isu, a native of Amata, Akpoha in Afikpo North Local Government Area of Ebonyi State was found inside a cellophane bag with a big stone hung round his neck.

Also, there was a gunshot injury on his right leg while his stomach was cut wide open by his killers.

The victim's village and a neighbouring community, Ezeke Amasiri, in the same local government area, have been at war over the ownership of parcel of land and a quarry.

Three persons were injured and were receiving treatment at a hospital while Isu was declared missing after Ezeke Amasiri allegedly attacked Amata Akpoha last week.

A search party was organised by Afikpo North Divisional Police Officer (DPO) which discovered his body in a cellophane

bag. The body was later deposited at Mater Hospital mortuary, Afikpo, for preservation and autopsy.

The state Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), DSP Loveth Odah, confirmed the incident.

She said: "You would recall that on 28th September, 2020 one Joseph Isu aged 53 years was declared missing by the family after the attack on Amata Akpoha people on the farmland suspected by Ezeke Amasiri community over land/quarry ownership where about three people were also reported injured and were taken to the hospital for medical treatment.

"The search party organised by the Afikpo north Divisional Police Officer (DPO) on October 1, 2020 recovered the body of the said Mr. Joseph packaged in a cellophane bag with heavy stone hung round his neck, with gunshot injury on his right leg and his stomach cut wide open. The corpse has been deposited at Matha

Memorial Hospital mortuary for preservation and autopsy.

"Meanwhile, the Commissioner of Police, Ebonyi State, Philip Sule Maku, who described the incident as barbaric and inhuman, mourned and commiserated with the deceased family, the general public, especially the people of Amata Akpoha community in Afikpo North Local Government Area of the state. He urges them to remain calm and not to take laws into their hands as he has ordered full scale investigation into the matter with a view to arresting and prosecuting the assailants.

"The police commissioner, while admonishing the residents of the state to always embrace Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) instead of violence, urges members of the public with useful information that will lead to the arrest of the culprit(s) not to hesitate to call the police through the command distress call."

The local government

Chairman, Mrs. Obiageri Oko Enyim, condemned the incident and urged security agencies to arrest and prosecute the perpetrators to serve as deterrent to others.

Enyim appealed to the two communities to sustain the spirit of brotherhood which had existed between them for many generations.

She urged the people to desist from taking laws into their hands no matter the provocation as according to her, government will ensure that justice is not only done but seen to have been done.

The chairperson directed that nobody should enter the disputed land for any reason till the matter was amicably resolved.

She called on community leaders on both sides to join hands with her administration to ensure peaceful settlement of the disputed land.

Driver remanded for ill

Ayobami Agboola and

man for offering N5,000 to bail widow