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OWERRI

# 2 soldiers, one other killed as Army allegedly attack Imo community

**V**ictims of Friday's raid by soldiers at Izombe community in Oguta Local Government Area of Imo State have decried the attack, describing it as "unwarranted".

Those who spoke to journalists yesterday in separate interviews, said they incurred great losses as a result.

It would be recalled that three persons, including two soldiers and a civilian were feared dead with more than 70 houses burnt down, following a disagreement between

## ...70 houses, 15 vehicles, 25 motorcycles burnt

youths that were collecting tolls from oil bunkers and soldiers.

Lamenting the incident, the traditional ruler of Aborsi-Izombe, Eze Pius Muforo said government should thoroughly investigate the main cause of the incident.

"I gathered that one youth and two soldiers were killed.

"It is very condemnable that human lives were lost in the incident and I sincerely sympathise with the families of the dead persons," he said.

According to him, contrary to reports, "my house was spared, but my subjects' houses were badly affected and I am not happy about it."

The traditional ruler lamented that over 70 houses, 15 vehicles and 25 motorcycles parked inside were burnt as well as the destruction of economic crops.

The traditional ruler, who expressed concern over the increasing spate of oil bunkering in the area, urged government to find urgent ways of stopping the oil bunkering in the area as well as finding ways of meaningfully engaging the teeming youths in the area and channeling their youthful energies

toward worthwhile ventures.

A victim, Mr Ifeanyi Chukwu Onyeukwu, who described the incident as a "tragedy" and a "big loss", said the community had never experienced such attack.

"It was like a war situation. They came here with about 30 Hilux vans and three armoured tanks. I hid myself in the bush watching from a distance how they flung explosives into our buildings.

"We lost everything including clothes, phones, electrical appliances and money.

"Particularly, my cousin lost over N500,000 cash while his wife also lost some amount belonging to a church group she belong," he claimed.

Onyeukwu added: "I am not part of the bunkering business in the area, but I am surprised that the problem caused by few individuals affected me and virtually everyone in the village." Another victim, Mr Victor Nwadike, a retired driver

with the Court of Appeal, said he and his brothers lost three cars and two buildings to the attack.

"On Friday morning, I left my home to Mbaize, I later received several calls that there was trouble at Izombe and I should not return.

"I returned on Saturday, to discover that three cars in my compound had been burnt down, my house and that of my brother have been burnt as well.

"We couldn't save anything from the houses. Now, all my sweat over the years have been turned to rubbles," he lamented.

Nwadike, who said since retirement, he relies only on his pension and sales from his farm produce, also appealed to the government to come to his aid.

When contacted on phone for comments, the Army's Public Relations Officer (PRO), Capt. Joseph Akubo declined comments.



One of the damaged properties

Sub-editor: 50 files

... Well for life helping to