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Community, Varsity Students' Clash Claims One

From Amby Uneze in Owerri, 04.24.2008

One student was killed while several others were injured in a clash between Ezioobodo Community in Owerri West Local Government, Imo State, and students of the Federal University of Technology, Owerri (FUTO).

As a result of the incident, the Senate of the University met and announced suspension of the on-going exams, ordering the students to resume their Harmattan break, which was to start this week Saturday.

The crisis, which left Palace of the Community's Traditional Ruler, His Royal Highness, Eze Samuel Okoroagbara destroyed, alongside other property including his official vehicle, started at about 1.30a.m. when a team of suspected armed robbers attacked a students' hostel near the community, shooting two occupants and wounding others.

Speaking to THISDAY, the monarch described the incident "as very unfortunate, because there was no sign of unresolved issue between the community and the students. For over 10 years, we have been leaving with the students, we have not had any problem. I never knew that there was any robbery in the area until the students came at about 1.30a.m., demanding to see me and when they could not see me, they attacked my Palace and our market."

He said those who attacked his community might not be students residing in his community, but those who leave at Developers Estate near the community where most of the students leaving off school campus and outside the community reside.

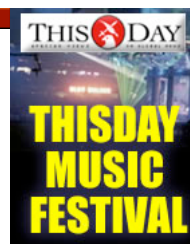
He appealed to both members of the community and the students to eschew bitterness and rancour, and live in peace as good neighbours, urging government to institute a panel of enquiry into the cause of the crisis.

FUTO's Vice Chancellor, Professor Celestine Onwuliri, said the student was killed by the armed robbers and not by their hosts, leading to the clash where 23 other students were injured.

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