

NEWS

Abavo Kingship Crisis Claims 30 Lives

Victor Efeizomorer
in Asaba

About 30 persons were reported to have lost their lives mysteriously in Abavo community, in Ika South local government area of Delta State as a result of the lingering kingship tussle that pitched the incumbent monarch, youths and some members of the royal family.

THISDAY checks revealed that some members of Abavo royal family are challenging the ascendancy to the throne by incumbent Obi, His Royal Majesty, Alhaji Uche Irenuwa, alleging that he is not a true decedent of the royal lineage.

A petition addressed to the state Commissioner of

Police and signed by Prince Fedilis Jegbefume and Prince Paul Jegbefume respectively, alleged that the processes that brought Obi Irenuwa to the throne are flawed, as he usurped the position.

They further stated that, "since this anomaly started, 30 persons have died including the person that crowned Obi Irenuwa in 1991, while others have fled to kingdom to avoid the wrath of the gods

They added that the people of Abavo are agitated because the wrong person is on the throne as it has nothing to do with the disbursement of royalties from Pan Ocean Oil Company in the community.

Meanwhile, the Abavo traditional council has de-

scribed as false and baseless the dethronement of the Obi of Abavo, Uche Irenuwa 11 by some youths in the town.

A statement, the traditional Prime Minister (Nwangue) of Abavo kingdom, Chief Ifeanyi Ehijene described the report as not only misleading, wicked and in bad faith but a calculated attempt by some persons to create mischief.



Uduaghan believes that the security of lives and property is very important for any society aspiring for greatness.

The statement said there was no iota of truth in the story as "His Royal Majesty, Uche Irenuwa 11 is still sitting on the throne of his ancestors and can not be removed by mere imaginative thoughts of mischief makers who have nothing in common with majority of Abavo people."

The statement advised individuals aggrieved for whatever reason to tread cautiously and

avoid denigrating the revered status of the monarch who is a highly respected member of the state Traditional Rulers' Council.

However, THISDAY gathered that a peace meeting was brokered by the Delta State Police Command on last Monday between aggrieved members of the Royal family and Obi Uche Irenuwa who led a retinue of palace chiefs to the parley.

At the end of the peace meeting the warring factions resolved to sheath their sword and allow peace to prevail in the kingdom while the contentious issues that triggered off the crisis would be looked into by all the parties. They also agreed to call the youths to order and refrain from any unlawful act capable of jeopardising the peace process.

Earlier in their separate presentations, THISDAY gathered that the spokespersons of the rival groups stated their points of disagreement which centred on the disbursement of

the royalty paid by Pan Ocean Oil Company to the community and the implementation of the MOU between the host community and the oil company which according to the aggrieved family members is shrouded in secrecy.

A former Attorney General and Commissioner for Justice in the state and an indigene of the town, Vincent Adaikpo, explained that economic motives rather than ascendancy to the throne sparked-off the crisis and stressed the need for peace to reign.

It was further gathered that the leader of the Royal family to the peace meeting, Mr Igbodo Iguma frowned at the administrative style of the king and called for more openness in the management of the resources of the community.

He complained that the Abavo royal family members were being relegated to the background and not carried along in matters affecting the community saying that was the crux of the matter at hand.

Meanwhile, the state police

command has threatened to deal decisively with any person or group caught engaging in acts likely to cause a breach of the peace in Abavo kingdom.

The deputy commissioner of police in the state, Mr Taiwo Lakanu, gave the warning yesterday, while addressing the two rival members of the Abavo royal family at a peace meeting in Asaba.

The deputy commissioner of police advised parties in dispute to be guided by the over all interest of the community in whatever they were doing saying that they should refrain from any unlawful act in the pursuit of their grievances.

He admonished leaders of the both factions to refrain from inciting youths to foment trouble saying that in the event of any violent crisis, the leaders would be arrested and prosecuted.

Lakanu therefore enjoined them to follow the path of peace and honour by seeking redress in court when aggrieved over any matter rather than take laws in their hands.

Osun Backs Regional Govt, Devolution of Power

Yinka Kolawole
in Osogbo

Osun State Government yester-

present state designate and that they should be created based on considerations of culture, land, nationality and political