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Communal clash: 4 policemen still missing

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BY JOHNBOSCO AGBAKWURU
 CALABAR— THREE months after the communal clash between Ntan Obu Uke community in Odukpani Local Government Area of Cross River State and its neighboring community of Ikpanya in Ibiono Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State, the whereabouts of four mobile policemen that were sent to quell the conflicts are still unknown.

The two communities had been engaged in a perennial communal clash over ownership of land and collection of royalties from the Fulani Herdsmen allegedly brought by the Ikpanaya community for grazing of their cattle at the flood plains of Ntan Obu Uke



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On May 23, 2012, the Ikpanya people at the dead of the night, allegedly attacked the Ntan Obu Ukpe destroyed property including buildings in the community, beheaded the Village Head, Chief Mfom Asanya and also adopted four mobile policemen who were sent to the area to maintain peace.

Although it was reported that over 30 persons lost their lives in the conflict, investigations revealed that only the Village Head that was beheaded was the casualty from the community but nothing had been heard of the policemen.

When the Cross River State Police command was contacted on the position of the missing police officers who were from Mopol 11, the Commissioner of Police, Mr. Osita Ezechukwu said the case file of the matter had been transferred to Akwa Ibom State Police Command, including the suspects arrested.

Ezechukwu disclosed that after investigations, it was gathered that only the Village Head that was beheaded lost his live, but was silent on the missing police officers, though he said investigations of their whereabouts were still going on as at the time the matter was transferred out of his command.

However, efforts made to reach the Akwa Ibom State Commissioner of Police yesterday, Umar Gwadebe could not yield any result as he neither picked his calls nor replied the text message sent to him, but

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the command's Public Relations Officer, DSP Etim Dickson, said the case had been referred to the zone six police headquarters.

DSP Dickson said investigations were on-going over the fate of the police officers who he said came from Mopol 11, Calabar and that it was after the investigations were concluded that the police would make statement .

But a police source said the "gallant police officers may have paid the supreme price," adding that it was after a specific period that the police could declare them dead.

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