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One dead, many wounded as C-River communities fight over land

on March 17, 2015 / in Human Angle 12:15 am / Comments

By Emmanuel Unah

CALABAR—A long-drawn-out land squabble between Kasuk Qua and Ikpai Qua clans in Calabar, Cross River State, has claimed the life of a 21-year-old villager, Asuquo Duke with many others wounded. *Niger Delta Voice* gathered that hostilities broke out between the two communities at a sand quarry in Ikot Uduak, last week. Counsel to Kasuk Qua, Barrister Orok Ironbor, stated that fight erupted following the contravention of a subsisting Zone Six Police Command order barring the contending from the land in contention, which was allegedly infringed by the Ikpai people, who kept on excavating sand from the pit located on the land.

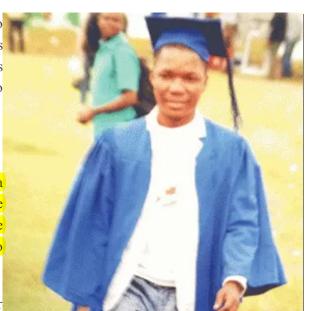
Fingers police

In a petition written to the Inspector General of Police made available to *Niger Delta Voice*, Barrister Orok also accused the police of taking sides in the matter by allowing the Ikpai clan to have access to the quarry sites to dig sand while constantly harassing the Kasuk Qua people, who go close to the area.

Untimely death

He said on the ill-fated day, the people of Ikpai were in the area excavating sand when some youths from Kasuk Qua got wind of the development and came to demand an explanation why they were contravening the police order, adding, they were attacked and Asuquo Duke was killed while several others were wounded in the fracas.

His words: "Under threat to our clients and in a bid to cover their partisanship and lack of investigation, the police got our clients to sign an undertaking, restraining them and Ikpai from the land pending when the



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matter is decided by Court of Appeal, which is a clear evidence that oncontent/uploads/2015/03/killd.gif) their own your officers have decided ownership of the land."

Late Asuquo Duke

But, reacting to the claim of the Kasuk Qua clan, Head of Ikpai clan, Ntoe Emmanuel Orok and the Secretary, Clan Council, Barrister Godwin Asuquo, said the claim by Kasuk Qua that Ikpai people were the ones contravening the undertaking signed with the Zone Six Police Command and the High Court ruling is a ruse. They said the culprits were the people of Kasuk Qua clan, who daily excavate sand from the area in contention.

Asuquo said: "We were not even aware that there was any clash in the area because our people are keeping away from the area in obedience to the police order and the undertaking they signed. "They must have had the fracas with some other people as the Inok Edim they mentioned in their petition is not in service of the Ikpai Clan." According to him, there have been several judgments since 1952, which declared that the land in contention belongs to Ikpai clan and that the land was originally acquired by the Cross River State Government in 1984/85 and given to the Nigerian Air force to develop a base, which never took place.

"After 28 years, the Nigeria Airforce did not pay compensation. In 2010, we wrote to the government requesting for repossession of the land for lack of compensation payment and in November, 2010, the government returned the land to us." Asuquo said when the government in 2012 decided to construct the Margaret Ekpo by- pass, they requested communities with interest in the area to forward their claims and it was only Ikpai Clan that got N6.3 million compensation while the request by Kasuk Qua was thrown out.

We're investigating—Police

At the Airport Police Station, the Divisional Police Officer, Mr. Asuquo Effiong, said the matter was under investigation and the police acted to save lives when they got reports that there was fracas at the sand pit at Ikot Uduak. Chairman of Calabar Municipality, Mr. Donatus Etim, said: "Both clans have the same ancestral roots and we are working towards peace."

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