

My 'palace court' is better than Supreme Court; nobody defies my ruling

— HRM Luke Kalanama VIII

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Wife abandons physically-challenged spouse, 4 children in Edo

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Rivers community, oil firm at war over youth's death

** It's a taboo; Shell, NSCDC must appease the gods- Community scribe*

** We've no hands in his death- Precious Okolobo, Media Relation Mgr, Shell*

"Youths attempted to disarm our men- NSCDC, Rivers Command

By Davies Iheamnachor

OKOROAGU- THE people of Igbor Etche, Okoroagu community, Etche Local Government Area, Rivers State are at daggers-drawn with the Shell Petroleum Development Company, SPDC, over the assassination of an indigene, Prince Chijioke Amadi, by a security personnel attached to a contractor working for the company, early this month.

Niger Delta Voice gathered that it is a taboo in Igbor Etche to kill a freeborn of the land. The villagers have consequently asked that the company must appease the gods of the land before it would commence further operations in the area.

However, SPDC denied having any hands in the death of Amadi, saying the contractor was vacating the site when the youths confronted him demanding for compensation.

Media Relations Manager, SPDC, Mr. Precious Okolobo, in a statement, said, "After completion of the work on June 1st, the contractor was preparing to demobilize and vacate the work-site when some youths stopped him, demanding payment of compensation and other monies. June 3rd, the situation escalated as our staff-escorted by a contingent of the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps, NSCDC, endeavored to persuade the youths to allow the contractor to vacate the work site."

The NSCDC, Rivers Command, also explained that the death occurred when the youths, who were demanding for compensation, attempted to disarm members of the corps.

The company's property

worth millions of naira and an operational van of NSCDC were razed in the fracas that erupted.

The community blamed SPDC for the crisis, alleging that heated commotion over the spill arising from the theft of the wellhead (Christmas tree), which the company left unguarded, escalated to the shooting of Amadi.

SPDC is to blame - Nwaobasi

Secretary of Okoroagu Town Supreme Governing Council, Prince Suleiman Nwaobasi, distanced the community from the theft of the wellhead.

He said, "What we are talking about now is a matter of sacrilege done on the traditional headquarters of Igbor Kingdom. It is a taboo in this land to kill a free born of the land, so SPDC and Civil Defense should come and appease our land. The gods of Igbor are resident in Okoroagu."

Nwaobasi said, "SPDC is only trying to find a way out. How can they accuse the people of this community of committing sabotage when they left their facilities unguarded since 2007?"

"The company declared the well unproductive and abandoned their facilities. They withdrew the surveillance contractors that were securing the facilities. Who do they think will look after their facility for them? There is no way they will hold the community responsible for the theft of the well head, if they had a surveillance contractor, we would have reasoned with them."

"Since 2007 that SPDC abandoned their site, they disengaged the surveillance contractor. They left their property in the open without security, nobody to guide it. When it is lost, they begin to accuse and suspect people around. Should the people of Okoroagu run away from the community because your facility is left in the open?" He queried.

His words, "It is wrong for them to say our people are responsible for their missing wellhead because they left it carelessly."



Late Prince Chijioke Amadi



Prince Suleiman Nwaobasi, Secretary of Okoroagu Town Supreme Governing Council.

Our youths didn't burn equipment, vehicle

Shedding light on the incident that

led to Amadi's death, he said there was a gas outburst at the well location, which caused some geyser (mist) to envelope the community for five days.

"It was like morning dew and it lasted for about five days, the whole community felt the effect. It was then Civil Defense came in. After SPDC disengaged their surveillance contractor, there was no alternative security provided to guide the facilities. If there were security men in that place, then, where were they when the well head was stolen?"

"There is nobody in this community who can dismantle those wellhead easily, besides 50 people cannot lift it except a self-loader and there is no way a citizen of this community will arrange for that. So it is strictly from them."

"We did not burn their equipment. I do not see how my people will burn their vehicle. In the first place, our youths were unarmed. They have killed somebody, it is better they own up because God is watching. If our youths were out for trouble as they are claiming after killing our son, we would not have allowed any of

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