

## Soldiers, youths clash in Cross River communal conflict

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By Emma Una

**CALABAR**—Three persons were reportedly killed and two soldiers injured as irate youths in Mkpani community clashed with soldiers drafted from the 13 Brigade of the Nigerian Army, Calabar to quell the communal fight between their community and Nko.

A reliable source in the community said the Mkpani youths were asked by the soldiers to remove the barricades they mounted on the Ugep- Ikom highway, Sunday, at the Mkpani junction, but the “boys mistook them for mercenaries and fired at them prompting the soldiers to call for re-enforcement.

The source added that when the re-enforcement team arrived they reportedly killed three persons, “so the conflict raging since last Friday, has claimed the life of several persons including a pastor, Eno Ubi; a butcher and two young men from Ugep, a neighbouring community, working in the rubber plantation.”

The conflict between the two communities started with the out-break of the inter communal clash between the people of Inyima in Yakurr Local Government Area and their Oyadama neighbours in Obubra Local Government Area of the state.

The conflict was aggravated, Saturday, with the killing of two Ugep persons by yet to be identified persons at the Nko Robber Plantation, which serves as boundary between the two warring villages.

While the Nko people accuse the Mkpani youths of the killing, the Mkpani people see the killing as an act by Nko people to drag Ugep into the fracas in order to join forces with them to fight Mkpani.