

Land tussle: 2 killed, 10 missing in Abia/Cross Rivers clash

ON FEBRUARY 4, 2020 12:24 PMIN **NEWS**

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Two persons have been killed at Isu community, Arochukwu council area of Abia state over a boundary clash with their Utuma neighbours in Cross Rivers State.

The Isu clan has been locked in a land dispute with their Utuma neighbours in Biase council area of Cross River State.

Vanguard gathered that gunmen invaded the Isu community at about 8am and shot dead two persons and fled.

President General of Isu Community, Elder Felix Okoro, told Vanguard that gunmen had laid siege on Isu land where they killed two natives of the community while about 10 are still missing.

He disclosed that the hoodlum came from the disputed area at Iheosu-Isu to attack the natives who had been taking refuge at a location in the community.

Okoro called for the return of the Police Post at Iheosu village, stressing that the area was peaceful before the relocation of the Police station.

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In his words, “The hoodlums invaded Isu clan this morning and shot dead two persons. We have been suffering attacks from our Utuma neighbours. This conflict started when limestone was discovered in Isu community and the Utuma have been laying claim to it, killing Isu people. Over 40 houses have been burnt and 60 persons killed with 3 villages sacked. For about two years now, the People of Iheosu- Isu and other villages have fled from the land because they were being killed and their houses burnt. They have become internally displaced persons in their land. The IDPS are now quartered at Ohabuike primary School, Obieze Isu. We are calling on the federal and state government to protect Isu people before they kill all of us. We have a state of emergency at hand with the over 3,500 IDPs at the primary school. Isu people are grateful to NEMA and the Abia state government for sending relief materials. It costs the community N2 million monthly to buy food, clothing and drugs for them. The IDPs cannot farm because their lands have been taken over and their houses burnt. Any Isu man who goes to the Iheosu-Isu is killed.

“Isu people are worried at the situation; we are being slaughtered like chicken. The Deputy Governors of Abia and Cross Rivers States have visited Isu and Utuma and appealed for peace, yet our Utuma neighbours won’t allow us live in peace. We no longer go to the disputed area which is our land, but they have continued to attack us.”

He urged the National Boundary Commission, NBC, as well as the Abia and Cross River State governments to urgently make further efforts to protect lives and property.

Contacted on the incident, Abia State Police Commissioner, Mr. Ene Okon, said the area is now calm, stressing that he sent a detachment of Mobile Policemen to the area to support their counterpart who had keeping security in the area.

He said; “I received a call that the people of Isu and the other community in Cross River State are fighting, exchanging fire. I have a detachment of police specifically sent there to check the communal crisis. But where today’s incident happened is far from where they are. It was at the boundary area. I directed the DPO, Arochukwu and they were able to move in to support the Mopol men, I have also sent another detachment of Mopol. The area is calm now. From the reports got from the DPO, one person was macheted to death while three were injured.”