

One killed, many wounded in fresh Abia, C-River border clash

●We've lost over 50 folks since 2018— PG

●Cries out for govt's intervention

By Steve Oko

ONE woman identified as Mrs Blessing Kalu Elem was reportedly slaughtered, after invaders suspected to be from Ukwa Community in Cross River State, allegedly raided Isu Community in Arochukwu Local Government Area of Abia State over the weekend.

An unspecified number of locals in Isu Community were also reportedly wounded during the raids which occurred on Friday and Saturday.

According to the President General of Isu Community, Amara Kalu, some of the locals who ran into the bush during the Saturday raid are yet to be accounted for.

He said those who were wounded had been taken to different hospitals where they are currently being treated.

The PG, who spoke with Vanguard, yesterday, said the invaders struck from unexpected locations for two days— Friday and Saturday.

He said while the victim was killed during the Friday raid, over 15 locals were maimed in Saturday's attack.

According to him, no fewer than 50 locals from Isu community have been claimed since the border clash erupted in full force in 2018.

He claimed that the discovery of limestone in the area in commercial quantity must have made their neighbouring Cross River State community start dragging their ancestral land with them.

The PG, who said many villagers had been rendered homeless following a series of attacks by the Cross River State neighbours, lamented that the invaders had gone beyond the disputed area to lay claims on their ancestral homes "where we are living."

He noted that people displaced from the affected villages had been living in the Internally Displaced Persons, IDPs, camp under severe conditions.

"We have lost over 50 persons since 2018 alone. Although this crisis has been there since 1985 and 1995 when we clashed, none has lasted like the current case that began in 2018. While we were planning for peace, we didn't know our neighbours were planning for war.

The PG appealed to the Federal Government to quickly intervene and bring a permanent solution to the lingering border dispute by

mandating the National Boundary Commission to delineate the boundaries between the neighbouring communities.

He also appealed that a military or police base be sited in the area to ensure peace and implementation of the decisions of the Boundary Commission.

Meanwhile, Governor Alex Otti of Abia State, during a visit to the devastated community, said his administration is committed to protecting the lives and property of Abia citizens and residents.

Otti, who was represented by his deputy, Ikechukwu Emetu, ordered the immediate transfer of scores of gunshot victims to a specialist hospital for proper medical attention

with attendant bills to be fully paid by the state government.

He said: "I have communicated with the government of Cross River State to call her people to order and stop further infiltration.

"The Governor of Abia State, Dr. Alex Otti, is saddened over this obnoxious act and encourages you to remain calm as the government is working hand in glove with the security agencies to ensure that checkpoints are mounted at all entry points into Isu, as well as constitute a patrol team. His condolences are with you."

NLC tackles Abia govt over alleged endless verification of workers

By Ugochukwu Alaribe

UMUAHIA—The Nigeria Labour Congress, NLC, Abia State Chapter, has berated the state government over what it described as the endless verification of workers and putting them to more suffering.

The state government had in a circular by the Head of Service, Dr. Ngozi Obioma, directed workers across ministries, parastatals, and the 17 council areas of the state to submit themselves to online verification, from May 10 to May 31, 2024.

Piqued by the directive, the NLC directed the workers not to submit

themselves to another round of verification until issues surrounding the planned exercise are ironed out by the government and labour officials.

In a statement by the NLC chairman and Secretary, Okoro Ogbonnaya and Emma Alozie respectively, at the end of its emergency meeting in Umuahia, the labour union queried the rationale behind subjecting workers to another round of verification at a time many have not been able to collect their salaries up to seven months due to hiccups arising from previous verification exercises carried out by the state government.

The NLC accused the government of insensitivity to the plight of the workers and a lack of disregard for labour in the state.

The labour union also faulted the decision of the state government to conduct such a sensitive exercise as verification without consulting the labour union in the state.

"While it perceives earlier exercises as designed to fish out ghost workers, the latest move coming just a few months after the last verification is ill-conceived and anti-workers, particularly in the face of the current harsh economic situation in the country," the NLC said.

Ebonyi LG polls: APC pegs chairmanship form for N25m, councillors N5m

By Ike Godwin

ABAKALIKI—AHEAD of the planned council polls in Ebonyi State, the ruling All Progressives Congress, APC, has pegged chairmanship form for N25 million and that of councillors for N5 million.

Chairman of the party in the state, Stanley Emegha, who disclosed it to journalists in Abakaliki, said the party has put everything in place to make sure the party comes out victorious during the election, adding that the party has done well to convince the people.

Addressing his supporters after picking the form at the party secretariat, Chairman of Ezza North and state Chairman of Association of Local Governments of Nigeria ALGON, Moses Ogodoali said he has done well to deserve a second tenure.

He tasked his supporters to be peaceful and law-abiding during the campaign, saying politics is a game of interest which must be played

with love.

It will be recalled that the Chairman of Ebonyi State Independent Electoral Commission, EBSIEC, Jossy Eze had announced that the local government election in the state would be held on Saturday, July 20, 2024.

He explained that the election would be held in the 171 political wards of the state and urged political parties to actively participate in the exercise by coming to the commission to pick nomination papers.

IPP can close Nigeria's electricity generation gap —Sabrud MD

THE Managing Director Sabrud Consortium Nigeria Limited, an indigenous metre manufacturing company, Mr Chiso Nwangwu, has called on the Federal Government to provide support for home-based electricity generating companies to boost the overall generation.

Nwangwu, who spoke in Awka, yesterday, said Nigeria could no longer continue to rely on the traditional hydro power generating companies in the quest to solve her energy challenges, adding that

Independent Power Projects (IPP) such as the Aba Power Project, which was built by Geometric Power, should be encouraged and supported.

The meter manufacturer said firms with technical and financial capacity should be allowed to go into the electricity generation value chain to engender competition and market price driven tariff regime.

He said: "IPP as exemplified by Aba Power Projects powered by Geometric Power is an experiment that has worked, the impact on Aba