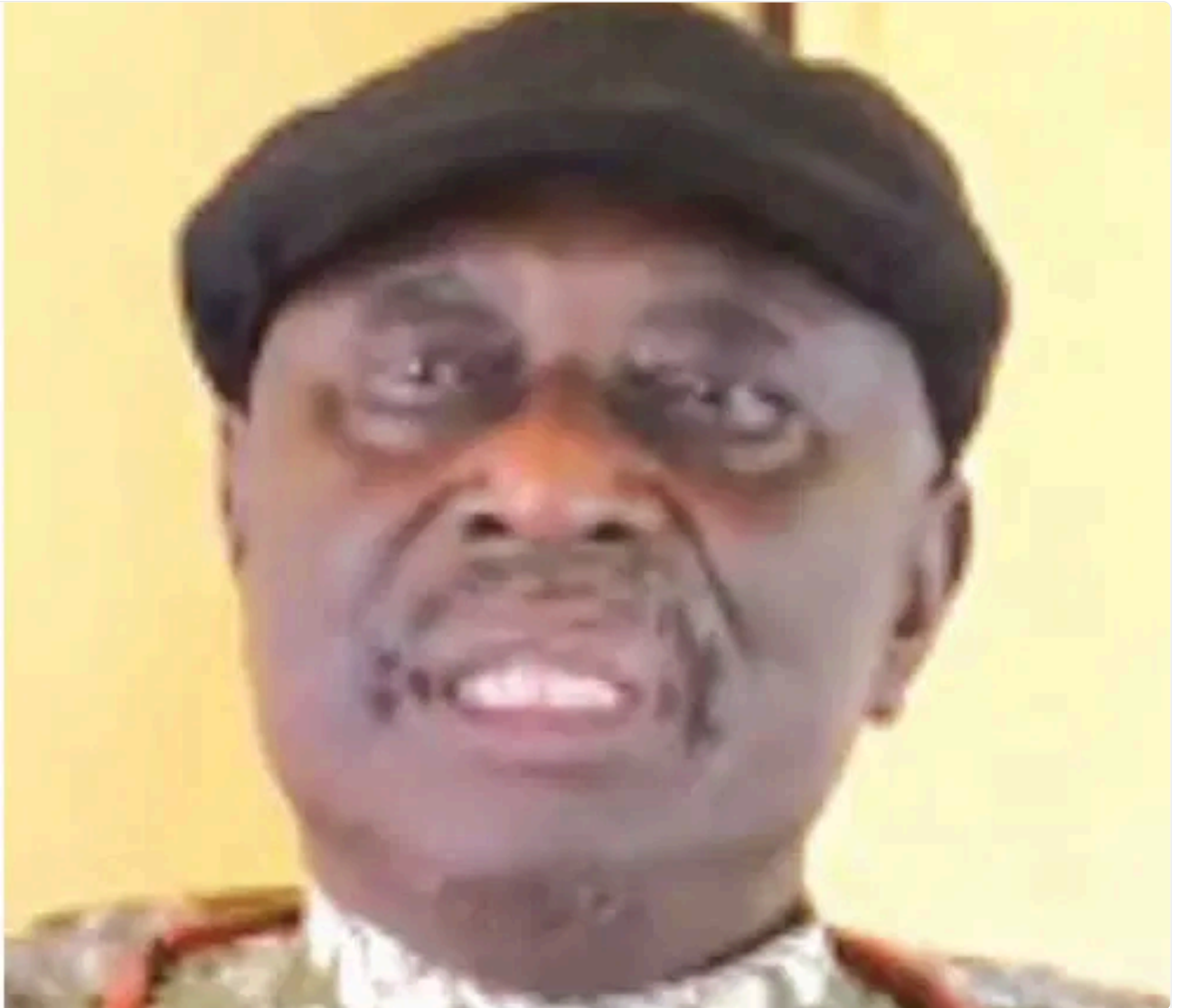


# Horror in Delta Kingdom: Herdsmen kill man in wife's presence, abduct 14-yr-old daughter



*Chief Shelly EDOMIDAGHAN*

By Emma Amaize, *Editor, NDV*, & Paul Olayemi

“They came suddenly into our farm, shouting in the Hausa language. My husband raised his hands and begged them. They commanded him to kneel. I was crying; I begged them not to kill my husband but they laughed and shot him in the chest.

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“Then, they turned to me and ordered that I should stop crying or I would join him. They cut me and left me to bleed,” Mrs. Abigail Eboseta, a 38-year-old farmer and mother of five, said with her voice trembling.

According to her: “They took my daughter away; she is 14 years old.” Mrs. Eboseta’s plight is among the many sad traumas that have bedeviled the indigenes of many communities in Idjerhe Kingdom, Ethiope West Local Government Area in Delta State, in recent times, by invading killer-herdsmen who have taken over their farmlands and forests.

She lives with her remaining children in a half-collapsed building in Adejei community, surviving on borrowed food.

Her youngest son still asks, “Mommy, when will Daddy return from the farm?”

The fear in Idjerhe Kingdom is that the hijackers have forcefully taken the 14-year-old girl as a wife or to satisfy their sexual urge in the forest where they hibernate. Another young girl was similarly snatched in the same manner in the kingdom.

The Ovie (traditional ruler) of Idjerhe Kingdom, Ethiope West Local Government Area, Delta State, HM Obukohwo Monday Arthur Whiskey, the Udurhie 1, is reportedly having sleepless nights over the menace of killer herdsmen.

He had met with representatives of villages under his domain, youths, religious leaders, and others to find a solution to the mounting threat.

An alarmed chairman of the Niger- Delta Youth Council of Nigeria (NDYCN), Delta State chapter, Freedom Omoniyi Freedom, has asked the Commissioner of Police in Delta State, Olufemi Abaniwonda, to temporarily shift his office from Asaba, the state capital, to the local government area to tackle the abductors making life unbearable for the people.

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## Tears, blood, and fear in Idjerhe kingdom

Tension has enveloped the 44 satellite communities in Idjerhe Kingdom. The soil is wet, not from the rains expected of this planting season, but from tears, blood, and fear.

In the community’s green fields, once referred to as food basket, where laughter once echoed and cassava sprouted in neat rows, silence and sorrow are the only reminders.

Beneath the rustling leaves and the morning mist, there lurks a darkness that has shattered homes, dispersed farmers, and engraved fear into the soul of a people.

This is no longer just about insecurity. It is about survival. It is about children watching their mothers being dragged into the bush. It is about men weeping over the freshly dug graves of their wives. It is

about mothers hiding in plantain groves, praying their babies won't cry and give them away.

For the people of Irodo and Adeje communities in Jesse Town, the land that once gave life has now become a battleground—a place where farmers go and never return.

## **They held me hostage for 3 days and collected N5m ransom — Maureen, housewife**

On Wednesday, May 14, they laid aside their hoes and cutlasses and took to the streets, not in rage, but in heart-rending desperation. One protester, Maureen, who hails from Irhodo community, was taken hostage and held captive for three nights in the forest.

“I was going to the farm when I ran into the kidnappers, who abducted me and took me deep into the forest, where they kept me for three days.

“It was on the third day that they called my husband on the phone and ordered him to pay N20 million ransom for my release. I begged that we have no such money because we are poor farmers.

They refused, saying they could only reduce it to N15 million. I continued to beg them, and they asked me how much we would pay. I said N2 million; they refused. But they later said my husband should pay N5 million.

“My husband went to borrow money and sell his land to raise N5 million, which they collected before releasing me. Now, we are hungry, we do not go to the farm, and have no food. We are also unable to pay back the money we borrowed.

“I still hear them in my dreams. I still feel their hands on my body. My husband is still paying back the money he borrowed to free me. We have nothing left. The government should come to our rescue; the kidnappings have become too many,” she said.

## **Police arrested 3 youths who took a corpse to their station**

A villager said angry youths took the remains of a native killed by suspected Fulani herdsmen in the forest to the police station to draw attention to their plight. But the Police arrested three of our youths and took them to Asaba.

“We call on the Commissioner of Police to release the youths because they did not commit any offence; they were only drawing attention to our plight with their action,” he said.

## **They kidnapped my daughter, Blessing — Mrs. Edijala**

Mrs. Grace Edijala did not eat for days after her teenage daughter, Blessing, was abducted while fetching firewood on the edge of their farmland.

“We thought it was just a delay. But evening came, then morning, then three days. On the fourth day, they called,” she said, clutching a wrapper to her chest. “They said if I talk to the Police, I will receive her head in a bag.”

Her voice broke completely as she whispered: “I have not heard anything since. My daughter is still in the bush. They said they would make her their wife.”

## **On my farm, I sustained this wound — Erumedafe, farmer**

William Eruemedafe, his arm still bandaged from machete wounds, added: “This scar is what I brought back from my farmland. And still, nobody is safe. Even yesterday, someone else was taken.”

I am afraid to go to the farm — Bright, cassava farmer

Ashe Bright, a once-thriving cassava farmer, sitting by his empty barn, said: “I wake up in the morning and stare at my tools. I do not use them anymore. If I go to the bush, I may never come back.”

Ethiope West turns den of kidnapping and theft — Omoniyi, NDYCN, Delta chapter chair

Omoniyi, in a statement titled: Insecurity: Relocate to Ethiope West now and help out, said: “I use this

medium to call on the Commissioner of Police, Delta State, to relocate to Ethiope West Local Government Area with his full arsenal to help us quell this evil vice that is causing sleepless nights for our people.

“We need proactive actions in this situation, as it is getting out of hand. We want an Ethiope West devoid of rancour or strife. We want our farmers to go to their farms without fear and make a living, as Ethiope West is a food basket in Nigeria.

“We do not want our youths dying like chickens in the name of cultism, and theft shouldn’t linger in our communities.

“Ethiope West Local Government Area, which used to be a hub of peace, has now become a den of kidnapping and theft as farmers, residents, and even churches, are feeling the brunt of insecurity.

“Not a day passes by that we do not hear reports of kidnapping, theft, cultism, and other vices threatening peace in Oghara, Mosogar, and Idjerhe, the three kingdoms in Ethiope West Local Government Area.

“Our farmers can no longer go to their farms as herdsmen and kidnappers are on the rampage, kidnapping these very low-income earners who work tirelessly to get their daily bread, only to be kidnapped and asked to pay millions of naira that they do not have.

“Churches are now a new target as equipment worth millions is being carted away from churches by hoodlums, as we have seen reports flying daily. “Cultism is also a plague that has taken the lives of many young men with great prospects in Ethiope West, and it does not seem like it will end anytime soon.

## **We are tired of burying our own — Edomidaghan, ICDU president-general**

On Saturday, the Idjerhe Clan Development Union (ICDU) convened an emotional press briefing at its secretariat in Jesse Town. It was not just a statement—it was a cry.

Chief Shelly Edomidaghan, ICDU president general, fought back emotion as he said, “Our people are tired of burying their own. Tired of abandoning farms. We are a peaceful kingdom. We don’t deserve this horror.”

He warned that the food supply to neighboring states like Edo, Bayelsa, and Rivers States may collapse, adding, “If Jesse falls, the food basket falls, and a hungry people is a dangerous people.”

## **Community leaders condemn the attacks and mass arrests**

Hon. Solomon Ugbebor, the secretary general of the ICDU, condemned the mass arrests of local youths.

“Yes, investigate, but do not victimize. Our boys are scared, angry, and tired. If this continues, peace will not hold,” he said.

Chief Fidelix Agbakoko, the first vice president-general, added, “This cannot go on; the government must act now. Our people are not animals to be hunted in their land.”

Hon. Simon Okoro, former ICDU secretary, emphasized, “Without our farms, Jesse has no economy we are farmers. That is who we are, and we are currently being pushed into early graves, poverty, and silence.

Children whisper to each other.

Teachers in hinterland communities reported a decline in attendance, and children who are afraid.

“When they hear motorbikes, our students hide under desks,” stated the head teacher, Mrs. Edokpolor. Some people have stopped talking. As though raising their voices would attract kidnappers, they whisper.

## **A town on the verge of collapse**

Market women now pay three times the usual price to purchase produce from a distance. “We once used baskets to transport cassava. We have debts now,” says trader Mama Rita.

“The devil now walks in the open here,” said local parishioner Reverend John Atawodi, adding, “No one is stopping him, either.”

## The final scream

The last placard said, “We don’t want revenge,” and it was held by an elderly man who was barefoot and hardly able to stand. “We are trying to live.”

A thin line lies between hope and collapse in Irodo and other Idjerhe communities.

If the Delta State government does not take action, it may find nothing but abandoned farms, empty homes, and people who scream but are not heard.

**We are losing our people – Ibori-Suenu raises the alarm in Abuja**

Far away at the federal chambers in Abuja, the voice of Idjerhe (Jesse) rose again—this time through Hon. Erhiatake Ibori-Suenu, Member representing the Ethiope Federal Constituency.

In a motion of urgent public importance, she told the House of Representatives that what is happening in Jesse is not just rural unrest, but a humanitarian crisis.

“The House must act. The Nigerian Police, the military, and security forces must move in,” she said. “We are losing our people. We are losing our food. And we are losing hope.”

The motion, which was referred for legislative action, called on the Inspector General of Police to deploy tactical teams, the military to increase surveillance, and NEMA to begin relief intervention for affected families.