

**The History of the Conflict between Ikot Offiong and Oku Iboku in Akwa Ibom State (1908-2004)**

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**Abstract**

An in-depth study of the history of world societies indicates that Empires, kingdoms and hamlets from the time of their existence has experienced conflict of one kind or the other. The society of Ibibio land is replete with conflict over the years. One of such conflict is the one between Ikot Offiong and Oku Iboku. This conflict lasted for over a century and was depicted in songs and folklores within Akwa Ibom and Cross River State due to its prolong nature. The conflict which escalated into hostilities between the two communities led to the eviction of Ikot Offiong people out of their ancestral home and political map Akwa Ibom State. Using the historical and descriptive approach this work examines the origin and causes of the conflict between Ikot Offiong and Oku Iboku in Akwa Ibom State.

**Keywords: conflict, community, litigation, resources, mediation**

**Statement of the Problem**

Cross cultured plurality and the struggle for the acquisition of scarce resources were the sources of the conflict between Ikot Offiong and Oku Iboku. These communities consisted of people of different identities who were living together. The people of Ikot Offiong are said to have been Efik migrants who were accommodated by the Ibibio people of Oku Iboku from 1810.<sup>1</sup> Oku Iboku were the host community while Ikot Offiong were strangers.

Contact between host communities and strangers are often laden with opportunities for destructive conflicts when both parties are unwilling to adjust.<sup>2</sup> Usually, a stranger population should make adjustment in order to abide by the ethics and other requirements of the host community. The people of Ikot Offiong were required by Oku Iboku to pay one shilling 6 pence (Is 6d) as rent on every thatch house (hut) per year from 1892. They were also ordered to present one jar of native gin (Ufofop) and one goat every market day to Oku Iboku and also carry out monthly sweeping of "Iso Uduoku", which was an area designated for the worship of the community's deity.<sup>3</sup> The supreme court of the colonial government in 1908 restrained the people of Ikot Offiong from trespassing into farm land that was not under their jurisdiction unless permitted to do so by the paramount Chief of Oku Iboku.<sup>4</sup> It would appear that the people of Ikot offiong failed to meet the demands of the host community, hence, conflict arose between them.

Competition and struggle for resources are responsible for most conflicts among communities. This usually arises when the resources competed for are not evenly

distributed. Human wants are insatiable and in the course of satisfying these wants, in the midst of scarce resources, destructive conflict can arise.<sup>5</sup> The struggle for the ownership of farmland between Ikot Offiong and Oku Iboku was the reason for the conflict between the two communities. Also, inability of the parties to abide by the different court ruling was responsible for the age long conflict.

## **BACKGROUND OF THE CONFLICTS BETWEEN IKOT OFFIONG AND OKU IBOKU**

Oku Iboku is bounded in the north by Mbiabo Clan in Itu Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State and Odot Clan in Odukpani Local Government Area of Cross River State and on the east by Okpokong Creek which run down to Inuakpa in the South East.<sup>6</sup> Oku Iboku is made up of twelve gazetted villages. The villages are Ikot Essien, Ika Oku, Ikot Mtu, Ikot Esia, Esik Esen, Ikot Etim Ema, Ufak Oku and Obot Oku.

The Community of Oku Iboku is said to have existed for over two centuries. It is also said to have been founded by three brothers-Aside, Esia and Abiyak Obio Okpon. They migrated from Oku Uyo in Uyo Local Government Area in the present Akwa Ibom state. This dates back to the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>7</sup> The Itu river run through the community. This enables the people of the area to do fishing while some are farmers. This is as a result the abundance of farmland in the area.

Ikot Offiong was one of the villages in Mbiabo Clan located very close to Oku Iboku. Other villages in Mbiabo Clan include Eton Ani, Offiong Ani, Nya Anatong, Efik Ibuno, Okono, Mbiabo Edere, Etehentem, Ikot Efa, and Ikot Otu. According to Edet Udo, Ikot Offiong was a fishing and trading settlement in Ibibioland.<sup>7</sup> Members of Ani Nkot Asa Edo family who migrated from Uruan founded Ikot Offiong near Oku Iboku. They migrated from Uruan when they were no longer accommodated by the community. Members of the family led by Etim Offiong approached the Chief and Elders of Oku Iboku and requested for a piece of land to settle and do fishing. With very strong terms of agreement their request was granted. They were given an area in Oku Iboku known as "Obot Ikot Aside near Itu river in 1810<sup>8</sup>.

The people of Oku Iboku and Ikot Offiong maintained cordial relationship for years before dispute arose between them. Conflict arose when the people of Ikot Offiong reneged on the tenancy agreement reached with the people of Oku Iboku. The terms of tenancy agreement included payment of one shilling, six pence (1 6d) for each thatch house per year, presentation of one jar of local gin (Ufofop) and a goat (Ebot) on every market day and monthly sweeping of "Iso Udu-Oku" which was an area designated for the worship of the community's deity. They were informed to abide by the stated terms of agreement and concentrate on fishing which was their main occupation. They were not given any portion of farm land apart from the portion they occupied as settlement.

At first, Ikot Offiong settlers complied with the terms and condition agreed upon with their host community. But, from 1890, they failed to observe the terms of the agreement with their host landlords. They penetrated the areas which were not under their jurisdiction.<sup>9</sup>

## **FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE CONFLICT**

Isaac Albert identifies four basic factors which contribute to community conflicts. They are competition for inadequate resources, contradicting value systems of the interacting parties, psychological needs of groups and individuals and manipulation of information.<sup>10</sup> Thus, one of the factors that contributed to the conflict between Ikot Offiong and Oku Iboku was the inability of the people of Ikot Offiong to keep to the tenancy agreement they had entered with Oku Iboku. This eventually resulted in competition for ownership of farmland which led to litigation in court.

Another factor which contributed to the conflict was the differences in values and culture of the two communities of Ikot Offiong and Oku Iboku. According to Isaac Albert, a culturally plural society will experience conflict because individuals and groups in such an area are not trained to see things the same way.<sup>11</sup> Although, the two communities lived together, their identities were quite different, the people of Ikot Offiong being Efik migrants held their culture and values in high esteem and thus refused to adapt to the values of their host community. They claimed to be stronger and hardworking than their host community. This attitude resulted in intermittent attack on their host and eventually led to conflict.

Lack of diplomacy on the part of Ikot Offiong was another factor that contributed to the age long conflict. Diplomacy is the management of relations by negotiation. Negotiation on the other hand means dialogued or discussion designed to produce agreement on matters of mutual concern.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, negotiation between the two communities would have produced understanding between them. Instead of forcefully penetrating the farmland of their host, the people of Ikot Offiong would have requested for the use of the host land for farming. Through such negotiation, their request would have been granted. The use of force or litigation is not a reasonable solution to community conflict, rather, dialogue and collaborative negotiation between the conflicting communities would enhance healthy relationship. The parties through such negotiations could have jointly confronted the challenges that faced them and therefore sought for ways to remedy them.

Chief Ibanga Ekpa of Oku Iboku and Chief Ikang Edet Okon (JP) of Ikot Offiong in a separate interview believed that Government reluctance over the years to give prompt attention to the conflict was another factor responsible for the prolong hostilities between the two communities. According to them, government would have taken over the disputed land and established an agricultural plantation and employed indigenes of the two communities to work there, this would have ended the conflict a long time ago.

## **LITIGATION BETWEEN IKOT OFFIONG AND OKU IBOKU**

The first litigation on the conflict between Ikot Offiong and Oku Iboku took place in 1908.<sup>13</sup> In that year, two Efik Chiefs resident in Ikot Offiong, Chief Itam Essien Eyo and Chief Eyo Ita were sued by the Chiefs of Oku Iboku in the supreme court of the southern protectorate of Nigeria for trespassing into Oku Iboku land. Chief Bassey

Ubong Okokon was the plaintiff while Chief Itam Essien Eyo was the defendant. In a ruling given on Friday 11 September, 1908 by his Honour, Mr. Justice R.J.B. Ross, the defendant was told to give up possession of the piece of land. The court also ruled that the original grant to Chief Eyo Ita was a small portion of land for building and fishing and not for the purpose of farming.

Dispute arose again in 1911 between the two communities due to trespass into Oku Iboku farm land by indigenes of Ikot Offiong. A court action was instituted in the supreme court of the colonial government in Calabar. The case lasted from 1911 to 1913. In 1913, the colonial Supreme Court ruled in favour of Oku Iboku, thus restraining the defendant (Ikot Offiong) from penetrating the said land.<sup>14</sup> Similarly, in 1913, the colonial government in Nigeria ruled that anyone or community that occupied a rented land for a period of hundred years must pay rent or outrightly acquired it. Between 1913 and 1935 Ikot Offiong people respected the Supreme Court ruling and did not trespass into Oku Iboku farm land until 1935.

In 1935, Ikot Offiong community was summoned by Oku Iboku to appear before the Native Court in the area for building houses on Oku Iboku land. The case lasted in the native court from 1935-1940. The judgment on the case was given in favour of Ikot Offiong that they were the owners of the disputed land. The people of Oku Iboku appealed the ruling of the native court in the High court of Ekpe division. However, the judgment was given in favour of Oku Iboku as the rightful owner of the said land. The court ruled that the owners of the buildings on the said land should recognize Oku Iboku as their landlord and pay rent to them.<sup>15</sup>

Peace reigned in the area from 1940 to 1957. But in 1958 dispute arose again, the people of Ikot Offiong were summoned by Oku Iboku to appear before the high court of Eastern Region of Nigeria in Calabar. The plaintiff claimed to recover their portion of land known as 'Oku land'. They claimed that the land occupied by the defendant was given to them by their ancestors for trading and fishing in Itu River and that in 1913 there was a dispute between the two communities on the same piece of land occupied by Ikot Offiong; and after 1913 the defendants respected the boundaries but in 1935 they started again to trespass and an action was taken against them. That since then the defendant did not penetrate the said land until in 1958 when they cleared the land and built on it. The Defendant arguments was that though it was quite true that the plaintiff's ancestors granted them the parcel of land where they settled, but that after the 1913 case, they continued to cultivate the said land and also built houses on it without any obstruction by the plaintiff until the present case.

The court rule in favour of Oku Iboku, the judgment was passed, by Mr. Justice N.U. Kaine on 31 May, 1960 in suit No C/41/1958. In the judgment, an injunction was placed on the defendants from building on the said land unless permitted by the plaintiff. Fifty pounds special and one hundred and fifty pounds general damages was imposed on the defendant for trespassing on the said portion of Oku Iboku land. On building on the said land, it was ruled that they should remain subject to their owners acknowledging the plaintiff as landlords and paying rents agreed upon by the parties.<sup>16</sup>

Peace reigned between the two communities until the civil war broke out in Nigeria in 1967. After the civil war in 1970, renewed conflict arose between the two communities which led to several court cases and litigation. From 1908 to 2000, there was no open hostilities between the two disputed communities. The dispute which arose were usually handled through litigation in court. In each of the litigation processes either of the party's won while the other appealed. This was the exact situation during the period.<sup>17</sup>

One of the disadvantages of litigation is that it takes a longtime to conclude when it commences. A particular case can last for some ten years or more before judgment is given. According to Ikwo Ekanem, an indigene of Ikot Offiong, "the litigation of the dispute between the two communities lasted for years before judgment was given; the cost of litigation is another factor that causes delay in litigation. The cost of hiring a lawyer for a case is quite expensive. Thus, it takes a long time before two communities in dispute can complete payment to their lawyers. Also, the court procedures of adjournment and observance of legal year recess also delay cases in courts."<sup>18</sup>

#### **THE WAR BETWEEN IKOT OFFIONG AND OKU IBOKU**

In the year 2000, the high court in Calabar in its judgment on the case between the two communities of Ikot Offiong and Oku Iboku ruled that Ikot Offiong were the rightful owner of the land across the Itu River which was hitherto the disputed land. The judgment came as a shock to Oku Iboku. Meanwhile, the victory was heralded by celebration and dancing around Oku Iboku community by the people of Ikot Offiong. Elders of Oku Iboku felt reluctant to appeal the judgment since it had lasted for a very long time and huge amount of money had been spent on it. But the youths looked at the judgment in a different way, thus, they vowed not to allow their ancestral land to be taken over by migrants.

Youths of Ikot Offiong, represented by a group known as "Nka Ukpotio," formented mayhem in the community. According to a report from the Divisional Police Office in Itu Local Government Area, the following events took place before the final onslaught between the two communities. On 12 May 2000, Bassey Usuk Enang (male) of Ikot Ada Akpan, Oku Iboku was taken out of his mother's inlaw house in Ikot Offiong to the beach where he was beheaded amidst pleading and wailing by his wife and mother in-law. Also, Enefiok Effiong Etim (male), James John Bassey, and Bright Okon Akpan of Ikot Eka Iko in Oku Iboku were murdered on 26 June 2000 while fishing in the river. Other fishermen killed while fishing in the river were Okon Bassey, Etim Joe, Emmanuel Solomon Etim, Etim Bassey Okon, Uwem Essien, Isong Solomon, Archibong Archibong, Solomon Etim Udo and Essien Ekpo Akpan. Those kidnapped were Joseph Effiong Antia and Emmanuel Boniface of Ikot Abiyak Oku Iboku while fishing in the river, Effiong Edem Amanam of Ikot Abiyak Oku Iboku was stabbed and wounded on 4 January 2000. Two indigenes of Iku Iboku were also murdered and their heads used in "Obon" dance around the community. The two men were Ini Okon Bassey and Akpan Etim.<sup>19</sup> Also, after, the last court ruling on the conflict, a boat regatta was organized by the community.

At the end of the water sport event, Ikot Offiong won the competition. They celebrated and danced around the community, that they had defeated Oku Iboku in Court and now in the regatta competition.<sup>20</sup>

The people of Oku Iboku also attacked their rival during the conflict. The vice chairman of Itu Local Government Area Mr. Bassey Ekanem, an indigene of Ikot Offiong was kidnapped. His way about or his corpse is not known or seen till today. There were other cases of assault, kidnapping and murder carried out by Oku Iboku on the people of Ikot Offiong. However, the names of the victims were not mentioned as the interviewees were not able to recalled their names. Also, the police officer incharge of Divisional Police Office in Itu Local Government Area, Inspector Tony Okon said that there were reports from both communities on assault, kidnapping and murder, but was unable to present a detailed document showing the records of names of the victims.<sup>21</sup>

From the forgoing analysis, it would appear that the assault was more on the people of Oku Iboku than on the people of Ikot Offiong. Similarly, the psychological effect of the assault, kidnapping and murder was felt more by the people of Oku Iboku. Thus, the brutal murder of Edet Etim Akpan and Bassey Usuk Enang mentioned above, ignited spontaneous reactions from the people of Oku Iboku.

As noted earlier, Oku Iboku youths had vowed never to allow any portion of their ancestral land to be taken over by migrant. However, the High Court ruling was in favour of Ikot Offiong who had hitherto taken over the said land. Therefore, the Oku Iboku youth from all the twelve villages mobilized in unison for revenge in order to reclaimed their lost image and their ancestral land. The plan for a full scale war on the people of Ikot Offiong was a top secrete unknown to even their rivals. Elders of Oku Iboku were not informed since they would have discouraged the youths.<sup>22</sup>

Although several attempt were made to resolve the conflict, it all ended in a dead lock. Thus on Friday August 4, 2000, severe onslaught erupted between the two communities at about four O'clock in the morning. The community of Ikot Offiong was taken unawares; therefore the people suffered heavy casualties. The entire community of Ikot Offiong was razed down. Those who survived fled from the village to nearby communities. The onslaught which lasted for only three hours left the entire community of Ikot Ofiong desolate.<sup>23</sup>

That was the event which led to the eviction of the people of Ikot Offiong from their community in the year 2000. This is because since the night in which they fled the community, they have not returned. Therefore, the Oku Iboku people took advantage and burnt down all the houses in Ikot Offiong Village. The only building that was not destroyed and still exists in the deserted community is the Presbyterian Church that was built in 1892 by the European Missionaries who penetrated Ikot Offiong in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Today the community, which was once a centre of economic and social activities, has become desolate with thick forest.

### **THE FINAL ONSLAUGHT AND END OF HOSTILITIES**

When conflict de-escalates, it is not an indication that the whole conflict has been resolved. This is because although parties to the conflict may lay down their arms,

hostilities can erupt again if confidence is not built between the conflicting parties through negotiation and mediation. Therefore, in March 2004, exactly four years after the eviction of the people of Ikot Offiong, renewed clashes erupted again between Ikot Offiong and Oku Iboku. Indigenes of the evicted Ikot Offiong were still living around the neighbouring villages of Inuakpa, Ikoneto Usung Esuk and so on.<sup>24</sup>

In an effort to return to their residence and perhaps redeem their battered image after an outright defeat and eviction, the people of Ikot Offiong mobilized again against Oku Iboku. They took time to plan and mobilized weapons with the necessary war strategy. Even with the level of mobilization and strategies adopted, they were unable to penetrate Oku Iboku villages. The study of community conflict reveals that in the course of communal conflict, once a party is defeated, evicted and properties including houses razed down. It is not easy for the evicted party to mobilized outside to invade and win a battle against an existing community. This is because, the party that won the first battle will always be conscious and ready at all time, to defend their community using both natural and supernatural tendencies. Therefore, since Ikot Offiong were unable to penetrate their enemies enclave, they fought in the farms, attacking and killing mostly women and children who were working there. Most of the fighters were hired mercenaries.

The onslaught was quite enormous and resulted in the killing of about sixty people mostly women and children who were working in the farm. Two pregnant women were murdered and the unborn babies removed and killed.<sup>25</sup> This affirms the enormity of the battle. The incident which took place on 20 March, 2004 was reported by both the Daily Trust and Pioneer Newspapers. The papers reported that about twelve persons were killed while several others were wounded. The two papers linked the attack to a disputed farmland in Oku Iboku as the some of the conflict.

The people of Oku Iboku did not fold their arms and watch their women and children massacred by their enemies. Accordingly, they mobilized for retaliation. They discovered their enemies hide out and attacked with full force. It was the fiercest and final open confrontation between the two communities. Both sides lost their men in the course of the onslaught. It was this final battle that led to the final re-settlement of the people of Ikot Offiong at Ikot Ekpo in Cross River State.<sup>27</sup>

### **THE IMPACT OF THE CONFLICT**

When negative and destructive conflicts erupt, the effects are usually on members of the conflicting communities. Both side usually suffered heavy casualties. The conflict between Ikot Offiong and Oku Iboku thus had a great impact on the two communities, the general public and the Government of Cross River and Akwa Ibom States.

### **THE IMPACT OF THE CONFLICT ON OKU IBOKU/IKOT OFFIONG**

One of the effects of the conflict on Ikot Offiong and Oku Iboku communities is the alienation of people from their relatives, families, in-laws and friends. Indigenes of the two communities, had lived together for many years. This resulted in intergroup



relations such as inter-marriages, trade and commerce, exchange of culture, festivals and sport competition eg boat regatta competition between members of the two communities. Therefore, relationship had existed among them for many years. Thus, the greatest effect of the conflict on members of the two communities is the separation of relatives, friends and family members from one another. The eviction of the people of Ikot Offiong from their ancestral settlement dispersed them to different parts of Cross River State and beyond. Today, the people are alienated from their relatives and this evokes emotions and trauma when the cordial relationships that once existed is recalled.

Youths from the two communities attended the same primary and secondary schools in the area. Today, youths of Oku Iboku have missed their colleagues and friends from Ikot Offiong and vice versa. Obviously, Ikot Offiong community has gone into oblivion as it was completely razed down. The survivors fled the land and are today dispersed into different parts of Nigeria. The greatest impact of the conflict on Ikot Offiong is thus their banishment from their long established settlement in Oku Iboku. Mr Etim Ukpabio, a former staff of the Nigerian Newsprint Manufacturing Company (NNMC) Oku Iboku, commenting on this development said:

I resided in Ikot Offiong after the closure of NNMC since my wife is an indigene of the area. When the crisis erupted, my family managed to escape from the area. I have since lost contact with my in-laws, i lost all my properties to the crisis and I had to start life a new.<sup>28</sup>

The most painful effect of the crisis on the two communities is the loss of human and material resources during the conflict. Both communities lost their youths and great men in the crisis. Chief Ikang Edet Okon said that Ikot Offiong lost many of its people because they were taken unawares. Oku Iboku took, time to plan the attack without the notice of Ikot Offiong. Thus, when they descended, the later suffered a great loss of their men, women and properties. Concerning the loss of material resources, he said that the entire community of Ikot Offiong was completely razed down. Some people were burnt to death in the blazing inferno.<sup>29</sup>

The people of Oku Iboku do not have the freedom to travel to any part of Cross River State including Calabar the capital city of the State especially the primary stakeholders in the conflict. Such people can be attacked by the people of Ikot Offiong if they are identified. For instance, a student of Oku Iboku origin who studied in Calabar was kidnapped in the year 2000, the students named Eyo Nya Eyo was kidnapped on the pretext that his father sent for him.<sup>30</sup> Till today, his way about is not known, it would appear that he was killed by his kidnappers.

## **IMPACT OF THE CONFLICT ON THE GOVERNMENT OF CROSS RIVER AND AKWA IBOM STATE**

The conflict which took place in Itu Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State drew the attention of the Cross River State Government. This arose because the descendants of Ikot Offiong were Efik migrants from Cross River State. Also, the



disputed land was located on the border between Cross River and Akwa Ibom State. Therefore, the conflict degenerated into a border conflict between the two states and drew the attention of the National Boundary Commission of the federal government of Nigeria.

The conflict sowed the seed of hate and discord between Akwa Ibom and Cross River States. This has made the Cross River State Government to disengage all Akwa Ibom State indigenes in the service of Cross River State Government. Similarly, Akwa Ibom State students in educational institutions in Cross River State are made to pay higher fees than indigenes of Cross River State.

There were also series of attacks by Cross River State indigenes on Akwa Ibom State indigenes around the Itu bridge head. Most of the fighters were hired mercenaries. Houses were burnt and properties looted during such attacks. The former Deputy Governor of Akwa Ibom State, Dr. Chris Ekpennyong during one of his visits to the disputed area to preach peace among Akwa Ibom and Cross River State indigenes living and doing business in the area, was attacked by the mercenaries.<sup>31</sup>

### **IMPACT OF THE CONFLICT ON THE GENERAL PUBLIC**

Oku Iboku is a border community between Akwa Ibom and Cross River State. Therefore, the general public were affected by the conflict during the period and after the crisis. During the escalation of the crisis which lasted from 2000 to 2004 motorists were sometimes prevented from passing through the two communities.<sup>32</sup> The fighters sometimes mound road blocks on the highway thus resulting in long queues and cars were searched through to see if enemies were inside.<sup>32</sup>

Economic activities were disrupted during the period of the crisis. Ikot Offiong women were involved in commercial agriculture. They cultivated Okro, pumpkin, tomatoe, garden egg and so on. People from the neighboring communities were usually employed by them to clear the farm land, plant and harvest their crops. It was indeed, a seasonal job for most people living within and outside the area.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, the eviction of Ikot Offiong people from the area resulted in loss of jobs for many people. Also, women who traded on the farm produce cultivated in the area have been forced to go elsewhere to buy the agricultural produce to trade in the city. This has resulted in most of them traveling outside the state to buy their products. Some of them spent days on the road before reaching Uyo City with the goods. Therefore, the eviction of Ikot Offiong people has disrupted trading activities in the area of Akwa Ibom State and its environs. Similarly, Ikot Offiong and Oku Iboku are fishing communities with fishing settlement in the estuary of Itu river. The fishing settlement near the Itu bridge head gives rise to fish trading in the area of the two communities. Therefore, the conflict between the two communities disrupted fishing in Itu river and fish trading in the fish market located by the side of the river near the bridge head. People trading on fish, prawns and crayfish were forced to go elsewhere to buy fish at very exorbitant prices.

### **Conclusion**

In the view of the foregoing, the conflict between Ikot Offiong and Oku Iboku lasted longer than any other conflict within Akwa Ibom and Cross River States. The conflicted

started in 1908 and existed through several government and administration in Nigeria. It was there during the pre-colonial era, colonial era, independence post independence civilian and military Government. But non of the administrations played any significant role to identify the causes of the conflict and find lasting solution to it. The conflict arose due to differences in identities and struggle for the ownership of farmland. Ikot Offiong people were Efik migrant who were accommodated by the Ibibio people of Oku Iboku on certain conditions. The failure of the migrant to abide by the condition of the host community escalated the conflict until hostilities ensued between them. The conflict resulted in a border dispute between Akwa Ibom and Cross River States of Nigeria since the disputed land lies within the boundary between the two states. The conflict sowed seeds of hate and discord between Akwa Ibom and Cross River States. This resulted in the disengagement of all Akwa Ibom State indigene working in the service of Cross River State Governments. The conflict resulted in the eviction of the people of Ikot Offiong from their ancestral home. They have not return since 2004 when they were defeated and evicted.

The conflict was handled through litigation in court and this study has proposed that the use of litigation is not an ideal solution to resolve community conflict. This is because any side that loses in court could appeal or resort to violence and the conflict escalates. Therefore, dialogue through collaborative negotiation between the conflicting parties can ensure healthy relationship between disputing parties. This is because the parties involved will make concessions and therefore jointly confront the challenges that faces them and thus seek ways to remedy them.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Memorandum presented by Oku Iboku to the Presidential Committee on Akwa Ibom/Cross River State interstate boundary 24-08-2004, p.10.

<sup>2</sup>Isaac Albert, *Introduction to third party intervention in community conflict* (Ibadan: John Archers Ltd, 2001). P.17.

<sup>3</sup>Interview with OtuEkong Asuquo Davies, 54 years at his residence at Oku Iboku on 4-6-2011.

<sup>4</sup>Memorandum Presented by Oku Iboku to the presidential committee on Akwa Ibom/Cross River State. p.11.

<sup>5</sup>Isaac Albert, *introduction to third party intervention in community conflict...* p.4.

<sup>6</sup>Memorandum presented by Oku Iboku... 24-08-2004.

<sup>7</sup>Interview with OtuEkong Asuquo Davies 54 years... 25/5/2011.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid p.9

<sup>9</sup>Ibid p.9

<sup>10</sup>Isaac Albert, *introduction to third Party intervention in community conflict* (Ibadan: John Anters Ltd, 2001). P.17.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid p.7

<sup>12</sup>Ibid p.24

<sup>13</sup>Joint memorandum submitted by the people of Oku Iboku, Mbiabo and Ayadehe Clans of Itu Local Government Area to the Obong of Calabar peace committee on boundary conflict between Itu and Odukpani, 13-03-2002.

<sup>14</sup>Supreme Court of the Colony of Southern Nigeria, 11 September, 1908 in Memorandum presented by Oku Iboku to the Presidential Committee on Akwa Ibom and Cross River States inter State Boundary committee on 24-08-2004.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid p.12

<sup>16</sup>Ibid p.13

<sup>17</sup>Interview with Barrister Ikwo Ekanem, 41 years in her residence, 8 Miles, Calabar on 1-7-2011.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid

<sup>19</sup>Memorandum Presented by Oku Iboku...

<sup>20</sup>Interviews with Demson Ekong, 40 years in his office Department of History and International Studies Uniuyo 16-06-2011.

<sup>21</sup>Interview with Inspector Anthory Okon, 47 years at the Itu Divisional Police Station 11-08-2011.

<sup>22</sup>Interview with OtuEkong Asuquo Davies, 57 on 25-5-2011.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid

<sup>24</sup>Interview with Akparawa Bassey Asuquo Effiong 45 years at his residence in Ikot Abiyak, Oku Iboku on 25-5-2011.

<sup>25</sup>"Twelve person feared deed in a communal clash" daily trust Newspaper 24-3-2004.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid p.13

<sup>27</sup>Interview with OtuEkong Asuquo Davies...

<sup>28</sup>Interview with Mr. Etim Ukpabio, 48 years at his residence 57 Udo Idiong Nka Street, Uyo on 4-8-2011.

<sup>29</sup>Interview with Chief Ikang Edet Okon 68 years at his residence, Ikot Ekpo eight miles, Calabar on 1-7-2011.

<sup>30</sup>Memorandum presented by Oku Iboku to the Presidential committee on the Akwa Ibom and Cross River State inter-state Boundary on 24-18-2004.

<sup>31</sup>Okon Sam et al, Cross River State Dares Akwa Ibom Weekend Pioneer Newspapers 4-2-2000.

<sup>32</sup>"Twelve persons feared dead" in a communal clash", Daily Trust Newspaper 24-3-2004.

<sup>33</sup>Interview with Mrs. Akon Asuquo Davies 38 years at her residence Ikot Ada Akpan, Oku Iboku on 25-5-2011.