

# Mayhem in Rivers community over chieftaincy tussle

**T**WO persons were feared killed and about 40 houses razed in a clash, which ensued after a chieftaincy dispute erupted in a Rivers State community yesterday.

Now, the deserted community, Edagberi in Ahoada West Local Council, has been taken over by anti-riot policemen from Port Harcourt

## • Two feared killed, 40 houses razed

to keep the peace.

The Rivers State Commissioner for Police, Mr. Felix Ogbaudu, told *The Guardian* yesterday that the crisis was caused by disagreement over the outcome of the Edagberi chieftaincy election in which Chief Onisomen Zudonu was declared the

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*From Kelvin Ebiri,  
Port Harcourt*

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winner.

Election of the paramount ruler of Edagberi was held on March 1, 2007 and it was witnessed by the Police and State Security Service (SSS) officials, as well as elders

and youths from the community.

After the election, Zudonu was declared the winner having scored 130 votes. His close rival, Chief Fyneface Walter, had 129 votes while the third contestant had zero vote.

When *The Guardian*

contacted Zudonu on phone yesterday, he explained that shortly after the election, some youths armed with AK 47 rifles and other lethal weapons stormed his house and asked him to relinquish his mandate or face dire consequences.

According to him, fear-

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# Two feared dead in Rivers mayhem

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ing that the youths might carry out their threat that day, he decided to travel to Ahoada where he slept until the next day. The armed youths were alleged to have stormed the residence of Zudonu's secretary and inflicted severe machete cut on him.

Thinking that the tension caused by the outcome of the election had subsided, Zudonu said he returned to the community on Monday and convened a council of chiefs

meeting.

The monarch said that it was during the meeting that one of the chiefs warned him to possibly leave the community immediately because he had uncovered a plot by supporters of his rival contestants to assassinate him that night.

"The chiefs asked me to leave. It was already around 11.00 p.m and since I could not travel back to Ahoada that night, I decided to travel to Jonkarama 2 and sleep in the house of the Ahoada West Vice

Chairman. A few hours later, I received a call that my house and those of my supporters have been razed," said Zudonu.

He accused his opponents of hiring hoodlums from a neighbouring state to wreak havoc on the houses of his supporters. According to him, "over 40 houses have been destroyed out of which eight were razed. Two persons also lost their lives in the attack, which started at about midnight till around 3.00.a.m."

Ogbaudu, who con-

firmed the incident, said houses were destroyed and one person was killed. He said scores of armed policemen have been deployed to Edagberi to restore law and order.

"The community is presently deserted but our men are there to restore peace. Houses were destroyed and one person killed. It's sad that a people who have lived together peacefully for ages will just choose to destroy each other because of chieftaincy dispute," he said.