

Suspected land speculators kill two, injure others

From **Charles Coffie Gyamfi**,

Abeokuta

ARMED thugs suspected to have been hired by land speculators on Tuesday night sacked the residents of **Ajambata** village near **Atan** in **Ado-Odo** Council of **Ogun** State.

At the end of the three-hour mayhem, two elderly persons were feared killed, many others injured and property worth millions of naira were destroyed.

Weapons used included guns, cutlasses and other dangerous

objects. One of the dead persons was identified as **Bayo Odunaro** while the identity of the other deceased could not immediately be ascertained.

An eyewitness, who spoke to *The Guardian* on condition of anonymity, said the invaders announced their presence at about 8.30 p.m. with sporadic shootings, resulting in the villagers scampering for safety.

Also torched was the **African Church** building as the hoodlums destroyed chairs and

benches in the building.

The village head, **Otun** of **Ajambata**, **Chief Adeleke Akinde**, who later spoke to journalists, alleged that the attackers were led by "a professional land grabber" (names withheld) that resides at **Eremi Illogbo** with the connivance of some residents of **Orita Ajebandele** village, which is few kilometers away to the affected village.

"The harassment started since 2001 before degenerating to this extent and we had complained to

the law enforcement agencies but nothing was done to nip the crisis in the bud, but rather than solve the problem of the harassment, the land grabbers had been using law enforcement agencies to intimidate and harass us," Akinde alleged.

According to him, the elders of the village had also petitioned the **State Security Service (SSS)** and the **Assistant Inspector General of Police (AIG)**, **Zone 2** for assistance but no help came until Tuesday's attack.

When *The Guardian* visited the village yesterday, the place was deserted with the youths barricading the roads leading to the community.

However, the state Police spokesman, **Mr. Muiyiwa Adejobi**, said he was yet to be briefed about the incident but advised the affected villagers to report the matter to the nearest police station if indeed they were attacked.

But the **Ogun** State Director of **SSS**, **Mr. Joseph Okpo**, confirmed that the villagers had last week submitted a petition alleging "harassment and invasion of their village by the land grabbers," disclosing that his men were still investigating the case.

Probe absolves Kaduna refinery of blame in alleged toxic waste saga

From **Saxone Akhaine** Kaduna

PRELIMINARY investigation by the Federal Government on the allegation of toxic waste dumping by the **Kaduna Refining and Petrochemical Company (KRPC)** in **Rido** community has absolved the firm's management of any blame.

Minister of Environment, **Hadiza Ibrahim Mailafiya**, had earlier ordered an investigation into an alleged dumping of substances suspected to be toxic waste by the **KRPC**, at **Rido** community, on the outskirts of **Kaduna** metropolis.

A Deputy Director, Pollution Control and Environmental Health, **Mallam Kacim Bayo**,

of the Minister for Environment, connection with the report of the alleged toxic waste dumping."

So far we have undertaken a tour of the various places, we went to where the waste was initially dumped and to where it was evacuated, we went to the **Rido** community to talk to the community head, we heard his own

views, and from all we have gathered, what we will do is to get to **Abuja**, put our report together with recommendations and we hope it will take off from there."

Bayero argued: "Some of the actions that have been taken

oratory and have seen nothing toxic about it for now even though we were told the chemical analysis is yet to be completed and we hope that by the time the chemical analysis comes out, of course the result will give us clearer picture of the nature of the waste." Also, the **Principal Scientific Officer** at the **Kaduna Environmental Protection Agency (KEPA)**, **Maureen Oyedaja**, said the waste was not toxic, from the physical test carried out on the materials.

According to him, "we arrived **KRPC** with my Director, **Laboratory Services**, we went to the site in question and we picked sam-