

Two killed, monarch's car set ablaze in Ekiti over stoppage of Ogun festival

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Truck crushes two undergraduates to death in Ekiti

Two persons have been reported killed in Ire-Ekiti, Oye Local Government Area of Ekiti State, in the violence that erupted yesterday as youths protested against stoppage of the annual celebration of Ogun Onire traditional festival in the town due to COVID-19.

A vehicle belonging to the town's monarch, Oba Victor Bobade, was also set ablaze by some angry youths who were determined to celebrate the festival on Sunday.

Governor Kayode Fayemi had, in an attempt to halt the spread of coronavirus, stopped the celebration of traditional festivals across the state.

To enforce the government's directive, the Onire of Ore Ekiti, Bobade, told the Ogun adherents to shelve this year's celebration, which pitted him against the worshippers as he met some resistance from some irate youths who insisted on celebrating the festival.

It was gathered that Oba Bobade was whisked away by security attached to him when the youths besieged the palace with dangerous weapons. The crisis, which had polarised the town, began on Sunday and snowballed into a full-scale protest yesterday, causing attacks between the rival factions, which prompted the Commissioner of Police, Tunde Mobayo, to swiftly draft policemen to the town.

It was further gathered that the victims were allegedly hit by stray bullets fired while making attempts to quell the raging crisis that paralysed business activities in the area.

A source said the town is currently boiling as relatives of victims have continued to protest the killing of their loved ones. "We have been having a serious battle in the town since our monarch urged the Ogun Onire worshippers to stop the celebration. The crisis between the factions loyal to the Oba and those with the worshippers led to the death of the victims," a source said.

When contacted, the Police Public Relations Officer, Mr Sunday Abutu, confirmed that two persons were killed during the crisis contrary to three being bandied.

"Yes, there has been crisis since Sunday. We have been trying to quell it. Some group of youths came and attacked the palace, destroyed things and burnt some vehicles that belonged to the king. We got a distress call and had to mobilise policemen; and we were able to rescue the chiefs from the palace. We are still monitoring the situation.

"Investigations are on. Those who are involved in the act will be arrested and brought to book. On my desk here, I have report of two persons who died. Their bodies have been



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deposited in the morgue. We have been able to arrest one of the gang leaders and he is in our custody right now.”

MEANWHILE, Ikere-Ekiti, the second largest city in Ekiti State, was on Sunday evening thrown into pandemonium as two university undergraduates were crushed to death by a truck. The undergraduates, Ojo Hezekiah Abidemi (25) and Ojo Ayomide (21), were running a degree programme at the College of Education, Ikere Ekiti, affiliated to the University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN).

Eyewitness told journalists that they were making moves to travel to Akure, Ondo State capital, to see their parents when the accident occurred. It took the intervention of spirited individuals to stop some rampaging youths from setting the truck ablaze.



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The eyewitness said: “The two students were on a motorcycle and were going to Akure when they collided with a truck and died on the spot. The victims had stopped over to buy fuel at a petrol station and when they left and entered the road, a moving truck which was on high speed overran them and the two died instantly.”

Confirming the incident, the Police Public Relations Officer, Ekiti Command, ASP Sunday Abutu, said the two students were killed by a moving truck and their bodies had been deposited in the morgue.

Abutu said: “It was sad and unfortunate that two young men could be killed due to avoidable accident. Preliminary investigation revealed that it was a case of collision and we appeal to motorists and other road users to always exercise restraint on the roads.” He added that the driver of the truck had been arrested and detained by the police.

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