

Chieftaincy tussle: Two feared dead in Ondo community, buildings, cars destroyed

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CRISIS rocked the sleepy town of Ikare-Akoko, headquarters of Akoko North East Local Government Area of Ondo State over the chieftaincy title of Olokoja of Okoja, leaving two people dead, while several buildings, cars and other properties were destroyed.

The two persons whose identity could not be ascertained were said to have been killed in different quarters of the community during the crisis.

The development led to the deployment of security operatives to the town to restore normalcy following sporadic gunshot by the two warring factions.

It was gathered that trouble started on Monday when a new Olokoja of Okoja, Chief Sunday Bada, was recently installed by the traditional ruler of the town, Olukare of Ikare-Akoko, Oba Akadiri Momoh, after stripping Chief Idowu Ogunye of the title.

Supporters of the two factions, who are mainly youths, clashed following the insis-

tence of Ogunye to continue to act as Olokoja of Okoja.

Ogunye was dethroned by Oba Momoh for absenteeism, disloyalty and refusal to obey the directives of the monarch, who cautioned him to stop parading himself as the Olokoja.

According to a source, the crisis erupted on Monday evening when the newly-installed Olokoja, Chief Bada, summoned a meeting, but supporters of Ogunye disrupted the meeting.

The source said the two groups engaged themselves

all through the night, shooting sporadically, while some properties were destroyed in the process.

Speaking in a press statement, Bada accused Ogunye of fuelling the crisis in the town since Oba Momoh dethroned him.

Chief Bada alleged that some thugs sponsored by the dethroned chief disrupted the peace meeting he called, just as he added that his house was destroyed during the fracas.

However, Ogunye denied sponsoring thugs to disrupt

the town meeting, saying the fracas was designed to cause mayhem in the town ahead of the coronation of the new Owa-Ale, Oba Adeleke Adedoyin.

Ogunye said he was prepared to attend the town meetings when he heard about the fighting.

He, however, insisted that he remained the Olokoja of Okoja, saying the Olukare could not dethrone him as he was in office before the emergence of the present Olukare.

"Bada is not a member of

our family. He is a stranger. I am still alive and remain the Olokoja. Olukare did not appoint me and he cannot remove me.

"They even destroyed my house. They arranged the crisis because of the next coronation of Owa-Ale, but we have been trying to avoid this crisis in order for peace to reign in the town."

The Ondo State police spokesman, Mr Tee Leo Ikoro, who confirmed the incident, said security operatives had been drafted to strategic locations in the town.