

Six Feared Killed As Fresh Violence Erupts In Ilaje

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« on: February 26, 2009, 11:47 PM »

Six feared killed as fresh violence erupts in Ilaje

By Femi Makinde, Akure

Fresh violence on Wednesday erupted in Ugbo and Ugbonla over the lingering chieftaincy tussle in the riverine communities.

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Six persons were said to have died in the mayhem which left the two communities deserted following the terror unleashed on the communities by gunmen who were accused of being sent by a well-known indigene of Ilaje.

No fewer than 20 persons were also said to have sustained gunshot injuries in the crisis. Most residents were hiding inside the bush for fear of being killed by the hoodlums.

It was gathered that the hoodlums, numbering about 50 and dressed in army uniform, stormed Ugbo and Ugbonla and set ablaze houses, including the palace of the deposed Olugbo of Ugbo, Prince Adebajo Mafimisebi.

The palace of the monarch of Ugbonla, Oba Henry Ogunfeyimi, and other houses in the town were also reportedly set on fire.

The whereabouts of the deposed Olugbo was still unknown as at 8pm when this story was filed.

The gunmen, who headed straight to Ugbo, were said to have invaded the town at about 4:15pm. A source said that the hoodlums started shooting and setting on fire houses and other property.

Ogunfeyimi told our correspondent on the telephone that "My palace and other houses in Ugbonla are on fire now as I am speaking with you."

He said that he was lucky as he escaped from the palace before the hoodlums stormed Ugbonla. The monarch said that he was hiding in an undisclosed place.

The Chairman of Ilaje Local Government Council, Mr. Olasehinde Mesogboriwon, told our correspondent that soldiers had been deployed to quell the crisis.

The Police Public Relations Officer in Ondo State, Mr. Adeniran Aremu, could not be reached for comments on the incident. Calls to his mobile phone were not answered.

There has been a lingering crisis over the Olugbo stool since the Supreme Court removed Mafimisebi from throne in January 2007. There have been crises in both Ugbo and Ugbonla since.

Some gunmen had on December 27, 2008 stormed Ugbonla and rained bullets on Ogunfeyimi's palace. Although the monarch escaped unhurt, about 10 vehicles parked in the palace were destroyed.

Ogunfeyimi, who is also the head of the Cherubim & Seraphim Church of Zion, on February 15, 2009, told our correspondent that a prominent indigene of Ilaje was planning to unleash terror on Ugbonla.

Ogunfeyimi alleged that the planned attack was aimed at disrupting the 61st anniversary of the town which was scheduled to begin on Monday, February 16, 2009.

He called on security operatives in the state to beef up security around the area saying hoodlums had been recruited and armed to start maiming and killing innocent persons beginning from February 16.

But the Police Public Relations Officer in the state, Mr. Adeniran Aremu, in an interview with our correspondent allayed the fear of the people of the town. <http://odili.net/news/source/2009/feb/26/435.html>



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Pages: (1)



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