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Two feared dead in clash over assault on Benin monarch's son

WEDNESDAY, 16 MARCH 2011 19:49 EDITOR



ANXIETY and tension reigned in the ancient city of **Benin** City, Edo State Tuesday as no fewer than two people were **feared** killed and several others injured in clashes between rival thug groups.

The hoodlums clashed **over** the decision of the state government to suspend the former chairman, Committee on Pipeline Vandalisation, Oakpawan Eriyo, from collecting levies in motor parks following a curse placed on him by the palace of the **Benin** monarch **over** an alleged attack on Prince Ekpen Erediauwa.

Among those shot was a **Benin** prince said to be the grandchild of late Oba Eweka, Prince Ebo Eweka. .

The **Benin** prince and others were shot along Lagos Street when armed men stormed the residence of the Arala of Benin Kingdom, Chief Omalayan Osula.

Osula alleged that the incident occurred when Eriyo stormed his residence with armed men, asking him to tell his children to stay away from the problem he had with the palace.

But another version of the story has it that trouble started when Eriyo boys defied the state government's suspension and wanted to continue to collect the levies and they were resisted by another group loyal to one of his archrivals led by Ogbe boys who supported the palace **over** the **assault** of Prince Ekpen.

It was learnt that the two groups engaged in a gun battle, which led to the loss of lives.

It would be recalled that the palace chiefs had on Monday placed a curse on Eriyo, after he allegedly assaulted **son** of the Oba and Caretaker Committee Chairman of Oredo Local Council, Ekpen.

The state police spokesman, Peter Ogboi confirmed the incident, saying that men of the CID had been dispatched to investigate the matter.

Ogboi confirmed that "some people who did the shooting have been identified and they will be arrested. Nothing will be swept under the carpet I can assure you."

The Edo State chapter of Action Congress on Nigeria (ACN) also announced the suspension of Eriyo from the party. A statement by state Secretary of the party, Osaro Idah said that the "party has suspended the State Youth Leader of the party, Comrade Osakpamwan Eriyo from the party with immediate effect pending the outcome of the on-going investigation of his recent conduct."

Meanwhile, the **Benin** Political Coalition led by the former Chief Whip of the Senate, Senator Rowland Owie, the Edo State Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and the Nigeria Union of Local Government Employees (NULGE), led by its Chairman, Agbons Uyigwe, have condemned the **assault** on Prince Erediauwa and urged the police to investigate the matter with a view to prosecuting the perpetrators.

A statement by the PDP state Publicity Secretary, Nosa Adams, condemned the act, saying Eriyo and other suspected thugs had a field day in the state because they enjoyed the state government's support.

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