

Seven feared dead in communal violence in Kwale

Sola Adebayo and
Olamilekan Lartey

SEVEN people were feared killed on Monday, while the palace of the traditional ruler of Umusadege, Utagba-Ogbe in Kwale, was razed as the rivalry between community youths and leaders snowballed into full scale violence.

The youths acting under the aegis of the Adege Progressive Association had besieged the palace of the paluku in reprisal for the attack they had suffered on June 13 when most of them were chased out of Umusadege.

Violence had erupted over the choice of community liaison officers to deal with an oil firm that was yet

to begin operations in its marginal fields located in the area.

The community leaders had outlawed APA for allegedly fomenting trouble in the area.

Most of them were chased out of Kwale to nearby villages and towns.

Earlier on Monday, some youths loyal to the community leaders had told our correspondent in Asaba that a rally had been planned for Tuesday (today) to protest the activities of the APA, who was allegedly being backed by a prominent politician in the government (name withheld).

It is not clear if they made it back to Umusadege before the violence erupted again.

The Kwale-Ogwashi-Uku road that leads to the area was

completely blocked for the better part of the day.

Already, riot policemen that were deployed in the area on June 13 had returned to stop the fighting.

The police have also imposed a curfew in Kwale to prevent the crisis from escalating beyond Umusadege.

The Chairman of Aniocha Local Government, Mr. Emeka Ukpe, had set up a panel to investigate the causes of the crisis in June.

Ukpe had appealed to the youths to keep the peace and be law abiding.

Reacting, the Police Public Relations Officer, Delta State Command, Miss Olabisi Okwuobi, confirmed the breakdown of law and order, adding that the police were yet to ascertain the cause of the crisis.

She said the Divisional Police Officer in charge of Kwale Division sent a distress call to the command headquarters in Asaba on Monday afternoon, adding that the command's Commissioner of Police, Mr. Udom Ekpoudom, quickly deployed conventional and riot policemen in the area to bring the situation under control.

Okwuobi, in a telephone interview with our correspondent on Monday night said the police had taken charge of the situation.

She, however, added that it was premature to comment on the number of casualties, adding that the picture would be clearer on Tuesday (today) when the Area DPO was expected to furnish Ekpoudom with the details of the incident.

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Powershift: SSPA chieftain faults Igbiniedion

Ibanga Isine, Abuja

EDO State Governor, Chief Lucky Igbiniedion, on Monday came under fresh attack from a chieftain of the South-South Peoples Assembly, Col. Abiodun Uwandia (rtd.), for saying that power must shift to the north in 2007.

Our correspondent in Abuja, said if the governor was not careful, the South-South people which never entered into any agreement with the north on power shift, would catch him on the streets of Min.

The former military officer said there was no document to show that South-South people agreed that power

Obasanjo leaves office.

He said, "If there is any document like that, let Igbiniedion produce it. In any case, such an agreement will not be binding on anybody. It is a piece of rubbish because there is no evidence that such an agreement was ever made."

"We have a document signed by Governor Obasanjo about six months ago in Enugu that power should go to either the South-South or South-East."

Asked what would have happened to the South-South if Obasanjo's third term bid had succeeded, Uwandia said the people of the zone would have benefited from the administration.

He said the support given by the people of the zone to