

**T**HE traditional ruler of Utagba-Ogbe, Kwale, Delta State, has been missing since Monday when his palace was razed by irate youths suspected to be members of the Adege Progressive Union.

The royal father, the Oduosa of Utagba-Ogbe, Obi Issac Nze-Uku, and many young people from different families have not been seen since Monday.

There was tension on the streets of Umusadege, Utakwa-Ogbe on Tuesday as an intermittent report of gunfire prevented the air from traditional hunters and members of a community vigilance group that kept vigil to prevent another attack on the community.

The oldest man in Utagba-Ogbe, the Okpala-Uku, Pa Oloku Onoh, who survived Monday's invasion, said there would be no reconciliation with the APU and their sponsors in government until all the people that were shot in the June 12 and 13, as well as Monday's attacks in the community recovered from their wounds.

Onah, 90, surrounded by community youths who were guarding him, said only truth and the Almighty saved him from Monday's attack by the APU members.

He told our correspondent that he could still identify the man who shot at him during the mayhem.

Residents around the burnt  
palace of the Oduosa of

the assailants were armed with automatic rifles.

A shop owner close to the palace said the attackers came in a Peugeot 504 estate wagon with "PDP" boldly written on it.

This tallies with the account of the oldest man in Utagba-Ogbe, that a prominent politician was behind the attack.

According to Onah, everybody, except the kids, knew that the Majority Leader in the state House of Assembly, who represents the area, Mr. Ossai Ossai, was behind the problem that had plagued the community.

He said he had reported the activities of APU to the police at least four times before the present crisis, but never received a favourable

response.

Specifically, he said while the APA youths were burning the king's palace, policemen stood guard at Ossai's residence.

But in a quick reaction on Tuesday, Ossai said his detractors were out to link him with the violence that led to the burning of many houses in Umusadege.

Ossai said his investigations as the legislator representing the area showed that some influential people were behind the protracted violence and had provided arms and ammunition to hoodlums to cause mayhem in the area.

Commissioner of Police, Delta State Command, Mr. Udom Ekpoudom, said the situation in Utagba-Ogbe had been brought under control.

Ekpoudom said the superior fire power of reinforcements from the soldiers attached to the Agip Independent Power Project in Okpai dislodged the troublemakers.

Ekpoudom expressed shock at the type of sophisticated weapons that was used during operation, adding that investigation showed that some politicians were involved in the crises.

He said they would soon be arrested.

Our correspondent who spent over five hours in Utagba-Ogbe and some of its five villages did not observe any police presence, rather, local militias with dane guns provided security in the quarters.

Other parts of Kwale were however peaceful.

## 2007: AD flays Igbiniedion over comment on presidency

### Emmanuel Obe, Benin

**T**HE Edo State chapter of the Alliance for Democracy has flayed the Governor, Chief Lucky Igbinedion, for kicking against the retention of the presidency in the South after 2007.

The Chairman of the party, Mr. Ozie Ubebe, said in a statement in Benin on Tuesday that Igbiniedion's position did not surprise the party because the governor had never been at home with the yearnings of his people.

"If Igbiniedion is a man of honour as he described him-

made to the people of Edo State?" the AD chairman asked.

He recalled that the governor was one of the signatories to the Southern Forum accord in Enugu where it was resolved that the presidency should stay in the South, and wondered why he was making a turnabout now.

"Granted that he had an agreement with the North to return power to them in 2007, he should let us know whose interest he was representing when he entered such an agreement," Ubebe said.

number of inglorious days left for Igbiniedion in our Government House. Never again will our people allow a godfather to foist any unpopular and non-productive leader on the people of Edo State," he said.

But the state government has said the critics of the governor are missing the point that the governor intended.

The Chief Press Secretary to the governor, Mr. Lucky Wasa, told our correspondent that the governor's position was informed by his concern for the unity of the country, which a rotation of power between the North