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Fresh violence erupts in Ijoko Ota

Ademola Oni, Abeokuta

Suspected hoodlums, numbering about 40, early on Tuesday, invaded **Ijoko Ota** in **Ado-Odo/Ota** Local Government Area of Ogun State, in a resurgence of violence in the community.

At least, three persons were said to have been killed when violence broke out in the area about 11 days ago over land dispute.

There were conflicting claims on Tuesday about the casualty figures in the early morning attack by the assailants who reportedly stormed the community at about 6.00am in a bus and started indiscriminate shooting.

Residents told our correspondent that at least 10 people were killed by the suspected hoodlums, the police said no death was recorded.

The attackers, who were described as cultists, because they were all said to be in black dress, were reported to have concentrated their attack on Ntabo and Ita Iyo areas of the town during the early morning raid.

It could not be ascertained if the assailants had a particular targets as some houses were attacked while others were said to have been spared.

Penultimate Saturday when the fracas broke out, one Ayodele Ibrahim was killed when the hoodlums stormed the town. The police confirmed that one Bashiru was shot dead and his wife was in critical condition on Monday as a result of gunshot injuries she sustained during the attack on her husband.

Reliable sources in the town, however, faulted the police claim as they claimed that no fewer than three people were killed by the rampaging youths, who were initially reported to be trying to enforce the judgment of the Supreme Court, ceding the ownership of the land in the area to one Matanmi family.

Events on Tuesday seemed to have punctured the claim as the Matanmi family house was said to have been razed.

A source in the town, who said his office had sent a truck to evacuate his family from a house he built in the community, told our correspondent on Tuesday that the violence had its roots in the power tussle between the Egba and the Awori.

While not denying that enforcing the Supreme Court judgment was a factor, the resident, who craved anonymity, said the Awori, who claimed to be land owners, were said to have resisted the alleged imposition of an Egba coronet oba in the town.

"Yes, it has something to do with the enforcement of the Supreme Court judgment but even the house of Matanmi had been destroyed as I'm talking to you," said the

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source.

“This has transformed to the Awori saying they cannot accept the imposition of an Egba king in this area. Right now, nobody can come out of his house in this area. The most disappointing thing is the lie that the police have been telling people. If they are on top of the situation, where were they when the people came here in Ntabo this morning and shooting freely? Where were they when the attackers came yesterday and killed people?

“As I’m talking to you now, I’m moving my family from a house I built with my money to Lagos, where I work. Thank God, my office has sent a truck to me.” He claimed that the assailants had the upper hand just as the Police Public Relations Officer in the state command, Mr. Olumuyiwa Adejobi, said information at his disposal said no one was killed in the town but did not deny that some hoodlums attacked the community.

“I just spoke with the Area Commander of **Ota** right now,” the PPRO, an Assistant Superintendent of Police, said.

“He told me no one was killed and that his men were on ground there. How can that person know that 10 people were killed when he couldn’t come out of his house as he claimed?”

Another source in the town, an elderly man, said he saw three corpses after the attackers left in the morning.

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