

# One feared dead as hoodlums attack Anambra community

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| By Ikenna Obianeri

Hoodlums, suspected to be thugs, on Tuesday morning, attacked residents of the Iyi-Owa Odekpe community in Ogbaru Local Government Area of Anambra State.

They were said to have set some vehicles and buildings ablaze while destroying vehicles parked on the streets and injuring anybody they met on the roads.

Similarly, one yet-to-be-identified person, a landlord, was feared killed and many persons were also reported to have sustained gunshot wounds after they were attacked and shot at by the yet-to-be-identified thugs within the community.

Speaking while conducting journalists round the community on Tuesday, the newly-elected President, Iyi-Owa Odekpe Landlord Association, Sunday Obinze, said the crisis started over an election dispute in the area.

Obinze said, “No fewer than 30 vehicles, 20 buildings and other properties running into multi-million naira were destroyed by the hoodlums. The Non-indigene Landlords Association in the area wanted to conduct an election to elect those who will pilot the affairs of the landlords’ association in the area which did not go down well with the indigenes.

“Consequently, the indigenes in a bid to hold firm the leadership of the community, sponsored a candidate of their own and conducted an election on Sunday, ahead of the main election billed for the following day (Monday).

“As we were conducting the election on Monday at Creative Model School, the hoodlums stormed the scene and disrupted the proceedings. But the landlords insisted on conducting the election, went to another place where they successfully conducted the election and I was declared the winner.

“Dissatisfied with the successful conduct of the election that produced me as the President of the landlords’ association, the hoodlums, who are Ogbaru youths, went on the rampage this morning (Tuesday), destroyed vehicles, buildings and shops of the winners of the election, among others.

“They stormed the community at about 7.30am today, they also stormed my house, set my cars ablaze, smashed the glass windows, doors of my building, collected the N3.5m meant for workers that I kept.

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“One person is almost dead, and over 15 people sustained various degrees of injury. The hoodlums made known to us those who sent them when they were doing the destruction.”

Also, the newly-elected Secretary of the association, Okolie Chukwunonso, alleged that the youths broke into his pharmaceutical shops and removed N4m used for PoS business, carted away his barbing equipment, provisions in his shop, among others.

He accused the President-General of Iyi-Owa Odekpe and the monarch of being the brains behind the attack by the hoodlums.

An industrialist, who was also elected the Vice President of the association, Chief Uchenna Ike, said five vehicles were destroyed in his industry, including those of other people within his premises.

“They collected N1.5m from my house, smashed the doors, windows and other properties when they came in. Scores were injured and I want Governor Chukwuma Soludo to come to our rescue,” he added.

But in a swift reaction over the telephone, the accused President General of Iyi-Owa Odekpe community, Innocent Nwanosike, said he heard of the mayhem and the damage in the community, but quickly absolved himself of any complicity.

“I did not send any hoodlum to attack the community. I am just hearing of the incident. It is a case of election dispute. The case would have been amicably solved by the court or government instead of resorting to violence. This case is an election matter of who will be the President of the landlords’ association which can be amicably resolved,” Nwanosike added.

Confirming the incident when contacted, the state Police Public Relations Officer, DSP Ikenga Tochukwu, said the police were on top of the situation.

“We are aware of the attack in the community and the security operatives are on top of the situation. One person is receiving treatment in the hospital,” Ikenga added.