

# Anambra landlords protest killings, destruction, levies



A cross-section of the protesters on Wednesday. Photo: Ikenna Obianeri

Ikenna Obianeri, Awka

No fewer than 1,000 landlords and residents of Iyiowa Odekpe in Ogbaru Local Government Area of Anambra State, under the aegis of Iyiowa Community Landlords/Residents Association, on Wednesday, protested alleged killings, destruction of their properties, imposition of multiple levies and extortions from the host community.

The protesters made up of men and women including the elderly, marched to the Government House in Awka, the state capital, carrying various placards with different inscriptions to convey their grievances just as they pleaded with the state governor, Prof. Chukwuma Soludo, to come to their rescue.

Some of the inscriptions include, "Iyiowa community is a hostile community", "Odekpe leadership is sponsoring terrorism", "Odekpe is home of touting", "Stop illegal collection of levies", "We are under siege of multiple taxations", among others.

Stressing the need for the intervention of the state government, the leader of the protesters, Dr Okolie Chukwunonso, who was flanked by the chairman of the embattled community, Chief Sunday Obinze, claimed that hoodlums sponsored by the host community invaded their community on November 7,

killed two persons, destroyed goods and properties worth over N30m.

Chukwunonso said, "On November 7, 2023 over N30 million worth of goods and properties, including over 30 cars and scores of buildings were destroyed when some yet-to-be-identified hoodlums invaded our community at about 7.30am. The hoodlums also shot two persons dead on that day. This is unacceptable to us anymore."

"Again, landlords and residents were always imposed with N10,000 monthly levies by various groups of Odekpe indigenes, who always come to extort us on a daily basis."

"We are using this medium to resist this obnoxious imposition because we are not in a banana republic. We are refusing those impositions but not by physically fighting but by reporting them to the state government and that is why we are here to report them."

"On that November 7, the Odekpe youths, led by their President General stormed our community and started burning cars, houses, shops and other possessions of non-indigenes resident in the area."

In a swift response, the Chief of Staff to the state government, Ernest Ezeajughi, who received the protesters on behalf of the state governor condemned the alleged mayhem in the community and vowed to bring the perpetrators to book, reiterating that Soludo's administration was not in support of hooliganism.

"It is unfortunate that the destructions were done by our own people. We have to invite the President-General of Iyiowa Odekpe to the Government House within the week, to come and explain because we can't tolerate this mayhem."

"Just give us time, probably two weeks, we will look into the matter, we will invite the PG within the week. We say no to such mayhem, we want every community to be peaceful," he stated.

On November 7, two persons were reportedly killed during the mayhem and properties estimated into N30 million destroyed which included the properties of the chairman of the community, Chief Obinze, his secretary, and that of the vice chairman, among others.

## er fire

"On November 28, 2023, around 15:18 hours, the Kwara State Fire Service responded to a fire at Peke village along Oko-Olowo Bode-Saadu Expressway in Moro Local Government Area, Kwara State."

"The firemen diligently worked to quench the inferno, but unfortunately, 25 lives were lost, and around 15 people were rescued with injuries."

Falade expressed deep sorrow over the incident that claimed many lives and emphasised the need for road users to prioritise safe driving practices.

He also warned drivers and other road users to adhere to safety measures consistently when driving on the roads.