

# Four killed, seven cops injured over Osun chieftaincy crisis

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File photo: A clash

By Bola Bamigbola

The Esa-Oke Central Union, a group of indigenes of Esa-Oke in Osun State, on Monday, alleged that some assailants in police uniform had invaded the town and shot dead four residents, leaving many others injured.

In some footage obtained from some Esa-Oke residents, five people were shown drenched in blood after allegedly being shot by the assailants.

But the state police command, having denied shooting residents of Esa Oke, said seven police operatives were shot and injured by some yet-to-be-identified assailants while travelling to the community to quell the crisis.

Addressing journalists in Osogbo, Mr. Oladiti Awodiran, who spoke on behalf of the union, said three vehicles were also razed on the premises of Owamiran of Esa Oke, Oba Adeyemi Adediran's palace during the crisis caused by disagreement over the appointment of Prince Timileyin Oluyemi Ajayi, as the Olojudo of Ido Ayegunle.

Awodiran, who said the pandemonium broke out after the announcement of a new monarch for Ido Ayegunle by the Osun State Government, insisted that a stranger was appointed as a traditional ruler over the community located within Esa-Oke town.

“The Esa Oke community had in the past vehemently resisted the attempt to install an oba or Baale in the community as the said settlement is right inside Esa Oke Town, a few metres to the campus of Osun State College of Technology Esa Oke.

“My heart bleeds, and my headaches as I stand before you today to inform you that men in police uniform invaded Esa Oke community and started shooting sporadically, leading to the death of no fewer than four youths, while several others were wounded in the mayhem. Three vehicles were also razed in the premises of the palace of Owamiran.

“To us, the appointment of a Baale or Oba on another town’s territory negates all logic, tradition and history. Esa Oke is in Ijesa North federal constituency. The settlement (Ido Ajegunle) on which a monarch was appointed is unit 11, a polling station under Esa Oke. As I stand here to address you, youths in Esa Oke are being arrested arbitrarily and are being moved to unknown places,” Awodiran said.

He called on the heads of security agencies in the state and the Office of the Special Adviser to the Governor on Security to investigate the killing in the community with a view to bringing to book the perpetrators.



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Meanwhile, Osun Command's Police Public Relations Officer, Opalola, during a chat with PUNCH Metro, said the operatives were on their way to Esa Oke, in response to a distress call when they were attacked by some assailants.

Opalola said, "Immediately the police were informed of the crisis in Obokun Area Command of Osun State, precisely at Esa-Oke, the Commissioner of Police drafted policemen from different places to go there and ensure that calmness was brought to the area.

"When they got to a point on their way, very close to Esa Oke, they met logs of wood on the road which did not give them passage. Some of the policemen came down to roll away the logs of wood so that they could pass to where they were going. As they came down, there were gunshots from the bush around that place which injured seven policemen. They also quickly repelled from the area where they saw the gunshots coming from and which made them arrest two of those hoodlums who were there.

"We have been working assiduously to ensure we arrest all the perpetrators of the criminal act. But for the policemen who were injured, we thank God that they didn't die, they are recuperating at the hospital now. This is the situation and we will continue to update you of what is going on as and when due.

"When they were repelled, two of them sustained injury and they were arrested by the police. After that, the investigation went ahead and we were able to arrest another five.

"Yesterday (Sunday), two persons were arrested overnight. One of them is the mastermind of the crisis. They used to call him Obanla of Esa-Oke. His real name is Olayinka Olatunji Lawrence together with his son, Daniel Olayinka. Apart from that, seven other people have been arrested, including the two persons who were arrested at the scene where they shot the seven policemen. The total number of people arrested in connection with the crises in Esa-Oke is nine."

She further said normalcy was returning to the community as police had already deployed more men into the scenes of the unrest to prevent further escalation.

Speaking in a similar vein, Osun spokespersons for the Amotekun Corps, Yusuf Idowu, and Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, Kehinde Adeleke, both said their organisations had deployed operatives to the scene of the incident.

The Osun State Commissioner for Information and Public Enlightenment, Mr Kolapo Alimi, urged the residents to embrace peace and allow amicable resolution of the disagreement.