

Again, 6 killed, houses burnt in Igbokoda clash



Solomon Arase, Inspector General of Police

By **BAMIGBOLA GBOLAGUNTE, Akure**

No fewer than six people have lost their lives in a renewed communal clash between loyalists of Olu of Igbokoda, in Ilaje Local Government Area of Ondo State, Oba Afolabi Odidiomo and the family of late Titi Olalebi.

Olalebi was gruesomely murdered two years ago allegedly by people suspected to be loyalists of the paramount ruler. The ruler and 10 others are currently standing trial over the crime.

The crisis, according to counsel to the Olalebi family, Mr Koboju Atima, started when some suspected thugs invaded the house of one Tale Iwatan at Temitan community.

Iwatan who is said to be a cousin to Olalebi was allegedly attacked by the thugs. Atima accused the monarch of masterminding the violence. He said the hoodlums arrived Iwatan family house with guns and other dangerous weapons shooting sporadically, and consequently set two houses belonging to the clan ablaze, when they couldn't abduct him. Atima further alleged that two vehicles belonging to the family members were burnt.

The lawyer, who said that the attack was

the second in the last six months, attributed the alleged harassment to the resistance of Iwatan to forcefully take over the family land in the town.

However, Oba Odidiomo denied sponsoring the attack, saying the crisis erupted as a result of the abduction of his errand boys:

"I am a man of peace, how can I mastermind violence in my domain. What actually happened was that I sent one of my boys on an errand. When we couldn't find him, we reported the case to the police. His corpse was later found somewhere in the town.

"The search party later went with the police to recover the corpse but in the process the unexpected happened when some thugs suddenly opened fire on them killing six people on the spot".

The monarch also disclosed that several people sustained injuries in the process and it took him serious efforts to pacify the victims against reprisal.

When contacted on phone, the state police spokesman, Wole Ogodo, neither denied nor confirmed the story. He merely promised to give the details as soon as police investigations are completed.

It was, however, gathered that a team of anti-riot policemen from has been deployed to maintain law and order in the area.

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