

Ebonyi Crisis: Death Toll Rises to 5

Death toll has risen to at least five in the crisis that erupted in Ezillo, Ishielu local government area of Ebonyi state, last weekend as a result of a supremacy battle over the ownership of a local food stuff market in the area, even as residents of the area, especially the aged women and children have deserted the place for fear of being caught up in the imbroglio.

This is coming as the State House of Assembly, in a unanimous motion yesterday asked the governor, Chief Martin Elechi to set up a panel of inquiry with a view to finding out the immediate and remote causes of the crisis, which has led to destruction of houses and other valuable properties belonging to several people.

A major crisis which involved mainly two rival language groups, Ezilo and Ezza, had erupted in Ezillo, last Sunday, resulting in the burning down of at least 80 houses, while so many people sustained various degrees of injuries.

As at Tuesday afternoon, when **THISDAY** paid a second visit to the area, houses were still being razed down despite the presence of mobile policemen and soldiers, drafted to the area to maintain normalcy. Some women, in company of their children were however seen carrying their properties and trekking to unknown destinations, appar-

*From Christopher
Isiguzo in Abakaliki*

ently in search of refuge.

As a result of the situation in the area, the House of Assembly during its sitting yesterday called on the state government to liaise with the law enforcement agencies to finding lasting solution to the crisis, while also asking the State Emergency Management Agency to arrange for an alternative

camp which could serve as temporary shelter for the displaced citizens of the area.

The House decision followed a motion jointly moved by the member representing Ishielu South constituency, Hon. Gabriel Ede and his colleague from Ohaukwu South, Kennedy Ogba under matters of urgent public importance, in which they prayed that security should be beefed up to avoid further loss of lives and property.

Tribunal Quashes Election of Anambra D' Speaker

The second Election Petition Tribunal sitting in Awka, the Anambra State Capital yesterday nullified the election of the Deputy speaker of Anambra state house of Assembly, Mr Afam Obi. He represents Ekwusigbo constituency in the state Assembly.

His election was challenged by Mrs Christy Udezé, the Action Congress candidate in the area who although withdrew her petition in defiance to the party's insistence on prosecuting the matter which it went ahead to do on the grounds that there was no election in the constituency.

The tribunal chaired by Hon Justice Bassey Etuba also yesterday upheld the election of Senator Ikechukwu Obiorah (PDP) Anambra south senatorial district because the petitioners,

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Chief Chris Atuegwu (Action Congress) and Azuka Okwuosa (APG) failed to substantiate their claims against the respondents that elections didnâ€™t take place in the district on April 21, 2007.

Justice Bassey Etuba who succeeded the former chairman of the tribunal, Justice Ibrahim Bako who resigned in February under hazy circumstances said while delivering judgment that the Action Congress party in Ekwusigbo was able to prove its case of no election in the area on April 14, 2007 beyond all reasonable doubts. Counsel to the Deputy Speaker, Author Okafor, Esq said they will appeal the judgement.