

ambra State capital was thrown into confusion yesterday following the killing of a former Commissioner for Women Affairs in the state, Mrs. Uzo Obi-Okoli, allegedly by her son. She was shot dead in her bedroom in the family palatial home in Awka.

Ten others who were critically injured in the Mgboro violence are receiving treatment in various hospitals in the state. Scores of residents have fled their homes.

*Vanguard* learnt that trouble started on Saturday following the alleged shooting of six youths from the community by policemen. The youths were protesting the security agents' interference in the activities marking the community's annual *Iri Ji* (new yam) cultural festival.

It was learnt that some prominent members of the community who feared that the festival might be turned into a political platform by some of their opponents were said to have invited policemen apparently to halt the ceremony.

An eyewitness said the policemen who arrived the town with in an armoured personnel carrier clashed with the youths when they (policemen) allegedly started smashing canopies and seats already arraigned for the festival at the premises of the Mgbowo Boys Secondary School. The policemen were said to have opened fire indiscriminately on the aggrieved villagers.

After the shooting that lasted several minutes, six of the youths were said to have died while several others were severely injured. "Angered by the development, the youths regrouped in the evening and resolved to deal with prominent natives who were suspected to have invited the police to disrupt the ceremony," the eyewitness said.

The youths then went on the rampage, torched about 15 houses belonging to the alleged instigators of the police action and the violence persisted till Monday when the State Commissioner of Police, Mr. Charles Dawodu, paid an emergency visit to the community to enforce a cease-fire.

The commissioner, leading a team of senior police officers reportedly appealed to the aggrieved natives to stop further violence, promising that the circumstances behind the shooting and killings of the youths would be investigated.

Natives of Mgbowo, who fled the community on account of the alleged "police invasion" have continued to lament the bloody incident, and asked Governor Chimaroke Nnamani to come to their rescue by instituting an inquiry with a view to apprehending those prominent persons behind the attack.

The decomposing corpse of a middle aged man believed to have been trampled to death during the rampage was seen on a major road in the town yesterday while the remains of dead youths were said to have been deposited at a mortuary in the town located on the Enugu-Port Harcourt expressway.

Some of the natives who spoke with *Vanguard* blamed the situation on the appoint-

ment of two "unpopular" natives as leaders of the two autonomous communities, which were recently created in the town by the state government.

They claimed that the two leaders whose houses were also burnt in the rampage and their supporters might have feared that the people would use the *Iri Ji* festival as an opportunity to register their displeasure and, therefore, invited the police to forestall any untoward development.

But the police command and members of the families of the alleged instigators, however, denied this claim even though they refused to comment on the development.

The state Police Public Relations Officer, Mr. Mike Abattam, speaking on the issue yesterday, said: "There is nothing like that at all. The police were not involved at all. We only received reports of violence in the town and we intervened to restore order."

Abattam, however, said the command had been able to restore calm to the area following the visit of the police commissioner, pledging that thorough investigations would be conducted into the incident.

## Ex-commissioner killed

Police in Anambra State confirmed Mrs Obi-Okoli's killing and the arrest of her son as principal suspect. Obi-Okoli served in the government of Dr. Mbadinuju. She was a director of Orient Petroleum Resources, Nigeria's first privately-owned refinery sited in Otuocha in Anambra State. She also ran orphanage homes in Awka, namely "Mother Theresa Foundation" and "Tender Love Orphanage."

The suspect was said to have fled soon after the killing.

The police are investigating the motive for the killing. Sources said the suspect escaped from the house in his Mercedes Benz 500 SEL.

The Assistant Commissioner of Police in charge of CID, Mr. Muhammed Kastina, who confirmed the incident, said the suspect had been arrested. He was said to have been arrested in Lagos and would be brought to Awka soon.

He said: "I received a signal from the Divisional Police Officer of 'B' Division in Awka about the incident.

When I received the signal, I mobilised my men and officers of the Homicide Department and I led them to the place. The security man at the gate allowed us in and we met one of the sons of the late woman who led us to the actual scene of the crime.

"I saw her in a stiff condition and in a pool of her own blood. So we conducted a step-by-step observation with a view to establishing the identity of the attacker. I was able to conduct some preliminary investigations that assisted me in drawing closer to the identity of the suspect."

"I picked other clues and we are still waiting for the Forensic Department of the Force Headquarters, CID Annex. On observation, I also recovered a very important clue that led us to classify the woman's son as the principal suspect," Katsina said.

He said the suspect, whose name he declined to mention, was later arrested in Lagos by detectives following an alert signal they sent out.

The widower, Chief Obi-Okoli, Chief Executive Officer of Bilante Construction Company, was unavailable. He was said to have returned to Awka on receiving the news of the incident but left for Lagos afterwards.

## 2007: Atiku alleges plot to l

Continues from Page 1

Mike Adenuga (jnr).

Otunba Adenuga was released early yesterday.

The EFCC which has declined to say anything official on the businessman's arrest dismissed, yesterday, as corrupt all past Nigerian leaders.

It also alleged that most public office holders, including governors in the Niger Delta, are corrupt.

## Atiku alleges plot

Chief spokesman for the Vice President, Mallam Garba Shehu in a statement in Abuja dismissed speculations about a financial deal between Vice President Atiku and Otunba Adenuga, saying: "Mike Adenuga is one of the several friends of the Vice President all over Nigeria. The Vice President does not deny that he and some of his friends, including General Ibrahim Babangida, have of late come under an intense searchlight intended to uncover faults that can be used to bar them from higher public office."

"In a further bid to nail the Vice President and General Ibrahim Babangida, the construction giant, Julius Berger, has equally been directed to produce information on their 40-year existence in the country, showing a list of their directors and shareholders, a litany of all the contracts they did for the Federal Government, states, local governments, businesses and private individuals."

"But our belief is that such 'lemon squeezing' fault-finding, aimed at the disqualification of the Vice President will not succeed nor will it deter the Vice President."

"Any talk of such disqualification is a wishful thinking, without a basis in law. Nobody has the right to disqualify any candidate seeking a political office and anyone in doubt about this should check the Nigerian Constitution and the new electoral law."

"As for the basic requirements for running for any political office including the Presidency, the Constitution is very clear about the requirements of aspirants."

On alleged financial link between the Vice President and Otunba Adenuga, Mallam Garba said: "The Vice President categorically denies that there have been any financial dealings between himself and the Globacom Chairman, and challenges whoever has records of any such dealings to make them public."

"He insists that there has absolutely never been any financial transaction between himself and the businessman."

"As for his supervisory responsibility over the Petroleum Technology Development Fund (PTDF), the Vice President confirms that he had such responsibility at some point in time, through Permanent Secretary, Petroleum Resources but as is usual with him, whatever approvals he gave were cleared by the President."

## We're ready to publish names —EFCC

Meanwhile, Chairman of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Mallam Nuhu Ribadu vowed yesterday to publish the names of 'corrupt' past leaders, governors and other politicians for Nigerians to reject

them at the polls.

Ribadu's threat came just as the President of Nigeria, Babangida, Congress (NLC), Comrade Adams Oshiomhole, vowed that Labour and its Civil Society allies would declare a national strike and unprecedented national protest should the 2007 elections be rigged.

Speaking at a summit organised by NLC on the challenges of transition in Nigeria, Mallam Ribadu said the commission did to say it would screen politicians but that it would expose all corrupt politicians especially past leaders who corruptly enriched themselves to the detriment of the nation.

He asked the National Assembly to review the electoral act to make it impossible for corrupt persons to stand for election in 2007, saying most of the past leaders who put Nigeria in the current mess now want to come back to squander the \$36 billion in the nation's foreign reserve.

The EFCC chairman vowed that the commission was ready for such corrupt leaders and politicians. His words: "All past Nigerian leaders are corrupt because they have all stolen the nation's wealth. We shall remove all corrupt leaders from contesting elections because our past leaders have turned this country into a *tokunbo* state."

"It is not possible to have free and fair elections where corrupt people are allowed to contest, because with their stolen wealth they can influence INEC, the electoral tribunals etc. I will not stop at any thing but to expose them. I have lost friends, made enemies, lost confidants. People have lost confidence in me, but the job must be