

3 shot dead in Uyo mayhem

● *As football
match ends in
chaos*

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UYO—THE game of football was on Sunday not only brought into disrepute but was also soaked in blood after three fans were shot dead, allegedly by policemen, in the aftermath of an

Continues on Page 15

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Continues from Page 1

ill-tempered premier league game in Uyo.

The match between Akwa United and Enyimba of Aba also left many innocent traders sulking over their losses and personal injuries after the chaos spread to the streets of Uyo.

And in Aba, Efik and Ibibio natives were said to be sleeping with one eye closed as they feared reprisal attacks from Enyimba supporters who returned in to narrate their escape from Uyo. But Enyimba Chairman, Mr Felix Anyansi Agwu, said yesterday that he had appealed to the fans not to take the law into their hands.

Accident of fuel depots from Apapa

self trapped in traffic for about 30 minutes, said tank farms which operations contributed to the unusual heavy traffic build up on a daily basis on the Apapa-Oshodi expressway would have to relocate.

Last Thursday, a major fire disaster which could have engulfed the whole of Apapa was averted after a tanker exploded at the loading gantry of one of the tank farms.

Minister of State for Water Transportation, Mr Mohammed Habib Aliyu, who was also on the enfourage condemned the siting of the tank farms in the area close to the port, saying in place like Singapore, oil storage facilities are located far away from the ports.

Earlier, Managing Director of the Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA), Chief Adebayo Sarumi, had told the visiting team that Z-Petroleum Ltd, G-EuroAf-

In a swift reaction, a rather horrified Nigeria Football League (NFL) wielded the big stick banishing Akwa United to Minna for all their remaining matches while a three-man committee was set up to investigate the remote and immediate causes of the mayhem.

Last night, Enyimba chairman, Mr Anyansi-Agwu speaking to *Vanguard* on phone said: "There is serious trouble now in Uyo. It is very, very serious and as I am talking to you, many lives may have been lost."

Darlington Azubuike, national co-ordinator of the two-time African champions said he was holed up in a police station

with the entire contingent of the Enyimba team.

His words: "As I am talking to you, I don't know the whereabouts of two of our players—Uga Opara and Chidi Okeke. They are nowhere to be found. I also do not know where the chairman of our Supporters' Club is. Our luxury bus, which conveys players and officials, is damaged. Five of our vehicles have been burnt.

"At least five vehicles belonging to the Akwa Ibom State Police have been vandalised. I have never seen this kind of carnage in all my years in football. But I must commend the efforts of the Akwa Ibom State Police for their role in shielding us and leading us to their station after the match was abandoned.

"It was too much. They started coming at us with knives, shovels and other dangerous weapons. All because of a football match? I can't believe it."

It was learnt that trouble started when Enyimba's striker, Ejike Uzoeanyi, fired a rifle of a shot into the net but the ball was handled on its way by an Akwa United defender, leaving FIFA-badged referee Felicia Okwugba with no choice but to signal for a penalty kick. The score-line at that time, 15 minutes to go, was still 2-1 in favour of the host team.

Enyimba won the first match 3-0 in Aba. "Having scored two goals following our opening goal by Uga Opara, the Akwa United boys and fans thought they had won the match, and the fans went on the rampage when we were awarded a legitimate penalty kick," Azubuike said.

But Akwa Ibom State Sports Commissioner and chairman of Akwa United FC, Dr Chris Ekong blamed it all on referee Okwugba who awarded an undeserved penalty.

"In the 93rd minute of the match (three minutes into added time), the referee awarded an undeserved

penalty to Enyimba FC. Even while Akwa United team accepted in good faith and wanted to play, fans were very angry and worried with the unjust actions of the referee, whom they had earlier insinuated was on the payroll of Enyimba FC.

"At this point, I told the AC (OPS), Police to move in the Police to control any situation that might arise especially on the pitch, but the response was very untimely and even lacking. It was during the melee that fans got wind of the information that the Mobile Policemen that came with Enyimba FC from Abia State had shot and killed three people from the neighbouring community that came to watch the match. This news caused an uproar among fans who started attacking the referee, Police, players and officials of both teams. It was in the process that the centre referee and assistant referee (1) were assaulted, but I quickly intervened and rushed them to the hospital, while making sure

that Enyimba players were well protected.

"I was in company of the Match Commissioner, Mr. Charles Ojughana; Mr. Davidson Owumi; Akwa Ibom State FA Chairman, Chief Effiong Johnson; and an SSS operative attached to the referee. Before we left for the hospital at about 9 p.m, I advised the Police to remove the corpse that was lying in the Stadium to the mortuary to avoid any problem when people came in the morning to see it.

"The Police promised to do that in the night, but did not remove the corpse until the community from where the dead fans came from invaded the Stadium in the morning to pick up the body. This angered them and they took a spontaneous action to go to the Police Station and deposit the corpses. Miscreants and enemies of government then joined to add ugly colour to the situation by destroying people's property," Dr Ekong explained last night.

Lagos APN guber candidate vows to promote family values

LAGOS — THE governorship candidate of the Action Party of Nigeria in Lagos State, Mr. Owolabi Salis, has promised to promote family values in the state if elected the governor in the April election.

In a statement, the Chartered Accountant turned politician said this would protect and improve the peoples' worth as they would know the importance of family valued.

"You'll see this will definitely arouse the consciousness of people to protect their names. They don't want to commit any crime because their names are very precious to them and before you know it, crime will be reduced and people will live

in harmony," he said.

The Ikorodu-born politician also said this would improve the bonds in families. "Ancestral days, Mothers' day, Fathers' day will be observed and individuals will be educated on how to show love and their concerns for members of their immediate family during these periods.

"To have a peaceful nation, start with a unified family because no matter how over populated we are, individually we hail from one family or the other.

"The leader of the party, Alhaji Lateef Jakande is a peaceful man. He desires anything unity and he has told us to improve on family values in order to have law abiding citizens," he added.