

# Mayhem in Enugu: 5 feared killed, 10 houses razed

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NO FEWER than five persons were feared killed while about 10 houses were burnt yesterday by youths in Eke-Obodo Uvuru Autonomous Community in Nkanu East Local Government of Enugu State who were protesting the alleged death of one of them in the hands of the police.

The palace of the traditional ruler of the community, Igwe Dumeh Nnamoko, was among property worth millions of naira razed in the bloody incident that forced the natives to abandon their homes.

An eyewitness told *Sunday Vanguard* yesterday that the youths numbering about one thousand and armed with dangerous weapons embarked on

the rampage following the death of one Chikordi, allegedly framed by the traditional ruler as among the over fifty youths of the town said to have disrupted the peace of the community.

Chikordi was reportedly arrested last week while returning from farm and was immediately taken to the state police headquarters in Enugu but trouble started when his relations and some members of the community who went to the police headquarters on Thursday to negotiate his bail could not find him. It was also learnt that Chikordi was among youths in the community who had kicked against the alleged misapplication of the community's finances following the creation of new autonomous communities by the state government.

Those who went to the police

headquarters in search of the young man were reportedly told that he was not in custody even though his name was listed in the police record books. They immediately constituted a search party which took them to a mortuary in the state where the lifeless body of Chikordi was found.

When the news of the discovery was received in the community, the enraged youths converged and marched to the palace of the traditional ruler and torched his house, those of his cabinet members and other natives suspected to have masterminded the arrest of Chikordi. A relation of the deceased now sheltering his wife and two children at his home in Agbani, alleged yesterday that his late brother "was killed by

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those who framed up charges against him."

However, reports from the area yesterday indicated that tension had gripped the community while all the major entrances to the community had been blocked by the rampaging youths. Meanwhile, some of the natives who fled their homes are now seeking refuge at neighbouring Akpaugo, Agbani and Amechi. Efforts to speak with the embattled traditional ruler proved abortive as he was said to have gone into hiding since Friday.

The state Police Public

Relations Officer (PPRO), Mr. Michael Abattam, who confirmed the report said investigation into the matter was in progress while the commissioner of police had dispatched a contingent of police officers to the area to quell the disturbabance.

According to him, preliminary reports had indicated that the youths actually had a problem with the traditional ruler, adding that while investigation was in progress, the youths went on rampage. "We have not made any arrest. We are still investigating the matter and the claim that somebody died in our hands", he said.