

15 die, 60 houses burnt in Benue mayhem

●Suswam, ACN trade blames

BY PETER DURU

MAKURDI—NO fewer than 15 persons have been reported killed with over 60 houses burnt in a politically-motivated violence that rocked Ugba, in the Logo Local Government Area of Benue State.

Eyewitness told *Vanguard* that crisis erupted last night in Ugba following the murder of a money lender and tipper owner in the town (names withheld) by unknown armed men.

It was gathered that while the police were investigating the matter, some youths suspected to be supporters of the opposition Action Congress of Nigeria, ACN, in the town, allegedly mobilised themselves and went on a reprisal attack on the paramount ruler of the town and notable PDP members from the town.

The rampaging youths, it was learnt, were said to have killed pregnant women, toddlers and the elderly, among whom was the wife of the paramount ruler, Zaki Terngu.

Reacting to the carnage, Governor Gabriel Suswam, who led a team of security personnel to Ugba, which is also his home town, for an on-the-spot assessment, expressed shock at the killings and destruction of property.

Suswam blamed the attack on suspected supporters of the opposition ACN.

The governor also assured that security

personnel had been drafted to Ugba to maintain the peace.

Reacting, the State Chairman of ACN, Mr. Abba Yaro, said the crisis

was sparked off by the alleged killing of two chieftains of his party.

Yaro said the party would not be deterred but continue to seek ways of

recovering their mandate from the ruling PDP.

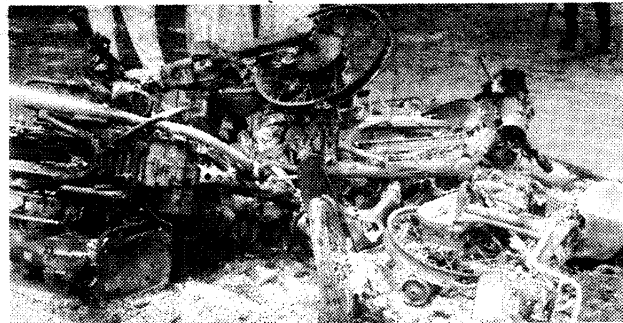
When contacted, the Police Public Relations Officer, PPRO, Mr. Ejike Alaribe, ASP, said the

situation has been brought under control as policemen had been drafted into the town while investigations are ongoing.

AFTERMATH OF THE VIOLENCE IN BENUE



One of the 60 houses razed down in the mayhem.



Burnt motorcycles in Ugba



From right, Benue State Governor, Mr. Gabriel Suswam, Commissioner of Information and Orientation (in white), Mr. Conrad Wergba, Senator Barnabas Gemade (in caftan), representing Benue North East Senatorial District and others assessing the extent of destruction at Ugba, in the Logo Local Government Area of Benue State.

\$1.6trn looted yearly — Adoke

BY IKECHUKWU
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ABUJA—THE Attorney-General of the Federation and Minister of Justice, Mohammed Bello Adoke, SAN, yesterday, said investigation has revealed that "the cross-border flow of the global proceeds from criminal activities, particularly corruption and economic crimes, is estimated to be

between USD 1 to 1.6 trillion annually."

The AGF, who said this in a keynote address at a workshop on stolen asset recovery and management of the proceeds of crime, organised by the Federal Ministry of Justice in collaboration with Justice for All and the International Centre for Asset Recovery, in Abuja, yesterday, lamented that half of the aforesaid fund are looted from

developing and transition economies as Nigeria.

He said: "Statistics further reveal that USD 20 to 40 billion of this inflow originated in bribes to public officials from these countries. When viewed against the report of the commission for Africa to the effect that 'stolen assets equivalent to more than half of the continent's external debt are held in foreign bank accounts', it becomes imperative for developing

countries that bear the brunt of this capital flight to vigorously pursue the recovery of stolen assets."

While identifying lack of political will to recover stolen assets as the bane of successive administrations, the AGF said there was no doubt that the re-investment of recovered assets in development projects can make a significant contribution to the improvement of the socio-economic challenges in our country.