

**METRO**

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## Photos: One-yr-old baby killed, 15 houses razed as gunmen invade Lagos community (Updated)



Awori Local Council Development Area of Ojo, at the early hours of today, setting several houses on fire.

A 15-month-old baby, who was sleeping, was burnt beyond recognition.

Also, no fewer than 15 houses were burnt, with property worth millions destroyed.

Ten persons were shot by the gunmen, while others, among whom is a 90-year-old man sustained deep matchet cuts in parts of their bodies.

When Vanguard visited the riverine community today, Saturday, the burnt baby's father, Taiwo Israel, was seen carrying the charred remains.

## I went in search of daily bread — Burnt baby's father

Explaining in tears, he said: "My baby's name is Emmanuel. I went out yesterday (Friday) for our daily bread, leaving my wife with my two children.

"By 9.30 p.m., she called me on the phone to inform me that some cultists were shooting. I told her to go inside with the children.

"At about 1 a.m., she called again to inform me that the cultists had set our building on fire. She added that she ran out without carrying our baby who was sleeping.

"My father-in-law, who went inside to rescue the baby, was attacked with a cutlass. He is still in the hospital.

"When I came back this morning (Saturday), I met my baby burnt to death. He was our second child. The first one managed to escape."

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Vanguard gathered that the affected community would stage a protest with the burnt baby tomorrow (Sunday), at the governor's office, in Alausa, Ikeja.

by the local government and some politicians in the area over the installation of a traditional ruler.

They alleged that a stranger was wrongfully installed as the traditional ruler. They said he should be from a family they described as “indigene of the community”.

Besides, Vanguard gathered that there had been a lingering tussle between two families in the community over who rules.

Explaining, one of the indigenes, Lawal Adesegun, who claimed to be a crown prince of the community, said: “The cause of this fight is ownership dispute.

“These people (invaders) are not indigenes of this community. We went to the tribunal set up by the Lagos State Government to fight for who would be the oba of this community and we won.

“There are documents from the tribunal, including judgments and clearance from the Ministry of Chieftaincy and Attorney General of the State. These confirm us as the Oba of Egan, Ori Omi Atto Awori of Ojo Local Government.

“However, some politicians of the leading political party, the Otto Awori Local Government wrongfully installed our opponent as our king. They did it in a hotel, not in the community.

“The politicians brought the man that was wrongfully installed to the community on Thursday, to force him on us. But the Police restrained them because they knew a fight would break out.

“This isn’t the first time they would be attacking us. A similar incident occurred on June 15, 2018. Some of our people were also killed.

“The local government intervened then and the case was dropped in court, frustrating our efforts to seek justice.

## **‘How politicians frustrate us’**

“The House of Assembly deliberated on the matter for two years. It set up a committee that recommended justice. They also emphasised the need to install the right person in the chieftaincy position

“But the recommendation was not implemented because these same politicians scuttled the process

“We are, therefore, calling on Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu to intervene before they wipe everyone out of this community.

“We have all our documents from the government. Yet, these politicians are blocking all our efforts to meet the governor, to hear us out.”

## **One of those shot in the neck was a 22-year-old farmer, Joel Babatunde.**

He said: “I was sleeping in my house when I heard gunshots. I ran out in confusion, unaware of where the gunshots were coming from. Immediately I stepped outside, the gunmen shot me.”

Also, another resident, who gave his name simply as Moheed, said over 20 houses were burnt.

He stated that most of the affected houses belong to members of the Oba Moshood Olarewaju’s family.

According to Moheed, “One of the houses burnt belongs to the oldest woman in our community.

“She was lucky to have been taken out immediately the house was set on fire. She too could have died inside.

“Oba Moshood Olarewaju ought to be the rightful Oba of this community and we still regard him as our leader.”

## **Residents flee community**

Many residents whose houses were spared were seen carrying their belongings, preparing to leave the riverine community.

Also, others who had become homeless were preparing to leave the community for fear of another attack.

However, armed policemen were sighted in the community to forestall further invasion by the gunmen.

Below are more photos from the scene:













