

Lagos Trade Fair complex shut as one dies, 3 injured during fracas



By Mathew Johnson and Florencemary Nwabueze

The Lagos International Trade Fair Complex has been partially shut following a violent clash that left one person dead and three others injured at the Balogun Business Association (BBA) market.

The incident, which occurred on Sunday along the Badagry Expressway axis of Lagos, prompted the management board to seal off the affected section of the complex to prevent further breakdown of law and order.

According to reports, members of a task force set up by the management board were enforcing a stop-work order on illegal construction when they were attacked by armed men. The assailants allegedly opened fire on the officials, resulting in the death of one task force member and injuries to others.

Sources said individuals linked to the association had encroached on a section of the complex not allocated to them and began erecting shops in violation of regulations that prohibit construction activities, particularly on weekends without approval.

An eyewitness said the task force team, unaware that the suspects were armed, came under heavy gunfire upon approaching the site.

“One of the task force members was shot dead instantly, while others sustained gunshot wounds,” the witness said.

Three injured persons were rushed to a hospital, where they are receiving treatment.

Confirming the development, the Executive Director of the management board, Mrs Veronica Ndanusa, said the BBA section would remain closed until those responsible for the attack are identified.

“I ordered the closure of the BBA section to prevent further breakdown of law and order after a task force member was killed on duty,” she said. “The plaza will remain under police lock and key until the perpetrators are brought to justice.”

Ndanusa stressed that the complex is owned by the Federal Government and managed under the supervision of the Ministry of Trade and Investment, with all traders operating on lease agreements.

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Chairman of the Trade Fair Task Force, Alhaji Bakare, described the attack as coordinated, alleging that the assailants were armed with guns and other weapons.

“They brought in armed men who opened fire on us. One of my team members was killed, and others were seriously injured,” he said.

The Chief Security Officer of the complex, Bawa Outa, also confirmed that prior warnings had been issued to halt the illegal construction before the confrontation escalated.

Security operatives, including police personnel under the Lagos State Commissioner of Police, Fatai Tijani, alongside civil defence and military officers, were deployed to the scene to restore order and evacuate the victim.

The incident comes amid lingering concerns over security at the complex, following a similar shooting scare last year involving officials of the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control during an enforcement operation.

Investigations are ongoing. Authorities have assured that those behind the attack will be apprehended and prosecuted.