

Tricyclist, PoS operator clash: 4 feared dead, several injured in Ibadan

By Adeola Badru

●Criminal elements responsible for clash—Oyo govt

IBADAN. NO fewer than four persons were reportedly killed and scores of others injured, yesterday following a clash between a tricyclist and a Point of Sale, PoS, operator, which escalated into violence in Ojoo, Akinyele Local Government Area of Oyo State.

The incident prompted the deployment of security personnel to restore order, while the Oyo State Government appealed for calm and urged residents to avoid reprisals as efforts continue to investigate the circumstances surrounding the violence.

The crisis, which paralysed commercial activities and sent hundreds of residents fleeing for safety, was allegedly triggered by the killing of a commercial tricycle (Marwa) rider during a dispute over a Point-of-Sale (PoS) transaction, Tuesday night.

Although eyewitnesses put the death toll at four, the Oyo State government confirmed casualties but said two deaths had been officially established as investigations continued.

The violence has since attracted the attention of the state government, traditional and community leaders, the police and the military, all of whom insisted that the incident was a criminal matter and should not be given an ethnic interpretation.

An eyewitness, Azeez Olamiposi, who narrated how the crisis began, alleged that the tricycle rider had visited a PoS operator at the Sabo area of Ojoo between 11:00 p.m. and midnight on Tuesday to withdraw cash.

According to him, the transaction became contentious after a network failure prevented payment confirmation, even though the customer had already collected the money.

He said: "Between 11:00 p.m. and midnight yesterday, a man riding a commercial tricycle went to a PoS at Strabag because he wanted to make a withdrawal.

"They gave him the money, but while they were trying to complete the transaction, the network was bad. He had already collected the money and used it, but the PoS operator said the transaction had not gone through.

"The man said, 'This is the key to my Marwa. This is my Marwa. This is my phone. You can keep them. I'm not running anywhere.'

The witness, however, alleged that while discussions were still ongoing, another individual intervened violently.

"While they were arguing, somebody suddenly came, slapped him and stabbed him until he died," the eyewitness alleged.

He further claimed that despite the victim's repeated pleas, he was allegedly assaulted by several persons.

"He had already collected the money and given it to the person he wanted to give it to. He kept telling them, 'I can't run away. My Marwa is here. This is the key to it. This is my phone. Keep everything. I'm not running.' But they didn't listen. They started beating him and stabbing him



VISIT: Deputy Governor of Oyo State, Bayo Lawal (middle) addressing the people of Ojoo in Akinyele Local Government Area, Ibadan; Secretary to the State Government, Prof Musibau Babatunde (left); Executive Assistant to the Governor on Security, CP Sunday Odukoya (red) and others, during a visit to Ojoo over the crisis in the area. Photos: Dare Fasube.



Shanties set ablaze during the crisis.

until he died," he added.

The witness also criticised the handling of the victim after the attack, adding: "He died yesterday. They didn't even rush him to the hospital immediately. They took him somewhere else first. Before people eventually rushed him to the hospital, he was already dead."

He said the situation deteriorated yesterday morning when residents gathered to seek an explanation over the alleged killing.

"This morning (Wednesday), when Yoruba boys and other people came to find out what had really happened, the next thing we saw was people from the other side rushing there and starting a fight," the witness said.

He further alleged that an armed man, whose identity could not immediately be verified, appeared at the scene carrying an assault rifle.

He said: "Before we knew it, there was a man who said he was either a policeman or a soldier. He was armed with an AK-47; everyone was scared because he was armed."

"He stood between the Yorubas and the Hausas, then told the Hausa people to chase the Yoruba away. Immediately, one of their men, whom they called 'General', brought out a gun and started shooting."

The witness, who claimed the shooting claimed another life, said: "While he was shooting, he killed a young boy who had gone to buy Indomie while several other people were also injured and are now in the hospital."

LG boss reacts

Reacting to the clash, the Local Government Chairman of Akinyele, Akinwale Akinleye, called for calm and insisted that the incident should not be viewed through an ethnic lens.

Akinleye said: "As a government representative and a community leader, this has nothing to do with ethnicity. This is simply a case of someone committing a crime. It has been reported, and as you can see, the police and the military are here. Arrests have been made, and I am confident they will get to the bottom of the matter."

"I want everyone to remain calm and allow the law enforcement agencies to do their job and secure the community."

"It is normal in a mixed community like this that when someone dies and the victim belongs to one ethnic group while the suspect belongs to another, people may try to turn it into an ethnic issue."

He disclosed that both Hausa and Yoruba leaders had already begun dialogue to prevent further violence.

"I can assure you that we have spoken with both the Hausa and Yoruba community leaders, and they are working together. This has nothing to do with ethnicity. It is purely a criminal matter. The situation could have been handled differently."

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Addressing residents during an assessment visit, the Deputy Governor of Oyo State, Bayo Lawal, attributed the unrest to criminal

elements and assured residents that those responsible would be prosecuted.

Lawal said: "The civil unrest in this area has been instigated by criminal elements. Criminals are simply criminals, and criminality has no tribal identity. Our priority is to ensure the restoration of peace and stability here in Ojo and, indeed, across every part of Oyo State."

"Oyo State has always been renowned for its peaceful coexistence, stability, progress and development. Despite the current situation, we remain committed to sustaining that legacy."

Appealing for restraint, the deputy governor said: "We have come to appeal to our people, particularly the youths, to give peace a chance."

"The government has already commenced profiling and investigating those involved, and anyone found culpable will face the full weight of the law, irrespective of whether they are Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba or from any other ethnic group. Criminality is not the exclusive preserve of any tribe."

"As a government, we are determined to establish the root cause of this crisis. Once the facts are established, we will deal with the matter decisively."

Acknowledging the loss of lives, Lawal said: "We appreciate the patience and understanding of our youths, men, women and business owners. We are aware that there have been casualties, including the tragic loss of two lives."

"A full investigation will be carried out, and those responsible will be identified, prosecuted and brought before the courts."