

2 die as NURTW members clash in Lagos

LUKKEY ABAWURU and
TUNBOSUN OGUNDARE

TWO persons were yesterday feared dead and several others seriously wounded at the intra-union clash over the control of motor parks at Iyana-Ipaja, Lagos State.

No fewer than, 20 persons have been arrested in connection with the crisis which paralysed social and economic activities in the area.

Daily Champion gathered that trouble started about 7am when some members of National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) said to be loyal to the incumbent chairman of the garage, Alhaji Saula Saka attacked other rivals in the area.

Various opposition groups led by

one Adesina Ajayi were said to have challenged the continued occupation of the office by Saka.

The aggrieved opponents were also said to have operated parallel offices and collected tolls from motorists causing the union to be at loggerheads.

An eyewitness said Saka's group led by one Solomon, aka 'Killer' attacked the rival group, destroying their office and property.

He added that the opponents retaliated, causing the spread of the crisis to Dopemu, Agbotikuyo, Agege, Pencinema, Abule Egba and its environ.

The eyewitness, who pleaded anonymity said that dangerous weapons including machetes, knives,

hammer, dagger and charms were freely raised in the free-for-all-fight. Unsuspecting civil servants and businessmen who were going to their various destinations were not spared in the attack. Shops and stalls were shut as people scampered for safety.

Another witness to the incident who gave his name as Shina said, he heard gun shots and saw people whose skulls were broken.

"My brother, many people were unconscious, they were wickedly matcheted, blood flowed freely and machomen wielded cutlasses and several weapons even with the presence of police," he noted.

Shina added, that vehicle operators quickly withdrew their vehicles from the road to avoid been

hit by stray bullets. When *Daily Champion* visited Iyana Ipaja, several shops, were still under lock and key, just as stains of blood were seen, so were broken bottles, apparently used for the crisis, littering the place.

A source at the police command said the hoodlums confronted policemen sent to quell the crisis and engaged them in a shoot-out.

He said it was in view of the above that the commissioner again drafted mobile policemen from Mobile Police Force (PMF) 20 Ikeja to strengthen the regular policemen.

Contacted, the Lagos State Police Public Relation Officer (PPRO), Mr. Olubode Ojajuni confirmed the arrest of 20 persons.