

10 feared dead in Kogi communal clash

Ten persons are feared to have been killed yesterday in Obajana, Kogi State, when people suspected to be members of the militant Odua People's Congress (OPC) wielding dangerous weapons attacked truck drivers waiting to lift cement.

Obajana is host to the multi billion naira Dangote cement factory.

Our reporter said the OPC members alleged the trucks were parked in a way that they blocked the Lokoja-Kabba expressway thus hindering the free flow of traffic.

But sources told *Daily Trust* the

From Sam Egwu, Lokoja

OPC otherwise known as the Oworo boys were in reality not concerned about any road blockade by the Hausa truck drivers but were fighting for "resource control."

One source said yesterday's fracas was triggered by the Oworo boys' attempt to force their way into participating in cement deals carried outside the gate of the factory, a business said to be dominated by the members of the Hausa community that has sprung up around the factory.

The source said the Oworo boys felt cheated that there was no concession for

the community where the company is located to buy and sell at reduced price.

The Oworo boys who believed they had been marginalised by the attitude of the Hausa boys who are dominating the union that control the business yesterday came to demand their right, and threatened to close the factory gate.

The Hausa community resisted the attack by the Oworos, and in the ensuing clashes many were killed.

It took the intervention of some soldiers and armed police to quell the

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clashes after some houses and shops had been set ablaze. In the fracas, knives, clubs and guns were used, leaving 10 dead, a trailer vandalised and a tanker burnt.

The *New Agency of Nigeria* (NAN) reported that the clash followed the killing on Saturday of three indigenes of the community in an accident near the company.

An eyewitness told NAN that some cement dealers and loaders had caused a scene at the company's gate over a disagreement on money. The incident, NAN learnt, had led

to the blocking of the Obajana-Kabba Highway, resulting in the accident.

Malam Tijani Aliu, a community leader told NAN that the indiscriminate manner the drivers park their vehicles on the highway spanning several kilometres, often resulted in accidents.

Chinedu Obiora, whose shop was burnt, said, "We were not at the scene of the incident, why they transferred their anger on us."

When contacted, the Police Public Relation Officer Mr Inalegwu Onum said enough police officers had been drafted to quell the crisis, but

said that the area commander did not come back to give full details.

Chairman of Lokoja Local Government Area, Yabagi Bologi, when contacted, said it was unfortunate that people died and promised that the incident would not recur.

State commissioner of police Ibe Aghanya also confirmed the incident, saying the fracas had been put under control.

He warned that Kogi state was not Niger Delta and so the protesters should stop talking about resource control.