

8 feared killed as traders, Okada riders clash in Abuja

By Adam Umar, Idowu, Isamotu & Seun Adeuyi

At least eight persons were reportedly killed during a clash between traders and commercial motorcyclists popularly called *okada* riders at Dei-Dei area of Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory (FCT).

City & Crime learnt that the incident happened at the popular Dei-dei Market, which hosts at least five businesses including building materials, timber, tomatoes, and scrapped

Smugglers 'go into hiding' after attempt to kill customs officer in Ogun

From Eugene Agha, Lagos

Suspected rice smugglers operating around Owode, Idi-iroko and Sango axes in Ogun State have gone into hiding after they carried out an attack on a customs patrol team during which one of the officers almost died.

The smugglers, who usually operate openly in the areas, had ambushed a customs patrol team and inflicted a deep cut on the head of one of the officers and took away his rifle, but they dumped the rifle not far from the scene of the attack.

Our correspondent who visited Sango market discovered uneasy calm in the area.

The market at Sango is one of the biggest markets where bags of foreign rice are usually

materials.

Several houses were reportedly razed during the fracas.

A resident of the area, who simply identified himself as Nnorom, told City & Crime that an accident involving an *okada* man who was attacked after a woman he was conveying was crushed by a tanker led to the breakdown of law and order.

He said, "At least five persons that I know have been killed in this incident. We have been calling for security intervention to no avail. We are really worried that this crisis is tilting towards ethnic dimension."

Speaking further, the witness said traders attacked the rider, who they blamed for recklessness which led to a trailer crushing his passenger.

According to him, the other *Okada* riders moved in to

rescue their colleague from the attackers before the situation degenerated.

Another witness said the driver of a trailer which crushed the passenger was attacked and some persons mobilised to defend him, hence the clash.

Surajo Abubakar, another witness, said there were gun shots towards where people were taken refuge.

"Four people were killed from the gun shots," he said.

Abubakar said two other persons, among the injured ones, lost their lives at a nearby chemist behind tomatoes market, where they were rushed to.

The third person was a man stranded inside the timber market, who was hit with machet and died around the junction.

Our reporter also counted

at least 10 vehicles set ablaze inside a motor park attached to the timber market.

Meanwhile, normalcy has since been restored in the area by the riot policemen, who were seen providing cover to the stranded traders and other motorists up to around 6 pm when our reporter left the scene.

When contacted, the spokesperson of the Federal Capital Territory Police Command, Josephine Adeh, told one of our correspondents that personnel of the force have been reinforced to put the situation under control.

Adeh, a Deputy Superintendent of Police, said the force could not ascertain the number of casualties, stressing that the main thing was to "first quench the fire".

"It is unfortunate that that incident happened. We are there right now. Our men are there trying to put the situation under control.

"I can't confirm the number of the casualties now. What we are after is how to control the situation now," she said.



■ The riot scene at Dei-dei in Abuja yesterday