

From Eugene Agha, Lagos

1 feared killed, 2 injured as task force opens fire on *Okada* riders in Lagos

A commercial motorcycle operator was feared killed while two others were injured when officials of the Lagos State Task Force raided Second Rainbow Bus Stop on Monday to enforce the state government's ban on *Okada* in six Local Governments and nine Local Council Development Areas (LCDA) following the killing of a sound engineer at Lekki.

Some of the riders alleged that the task force men arrived the place around 9am in a *gestapo* manner in about 10 vehicles.

One of the riders, Musa Kareem, said that while some of the task force men went after *Okada* riders, others descended on drivers of private vehicles trying to cut off the gridlock at Mile 2 Bridge through Amuwo Odofin Estate.

He said, "They demanded outrageous amounts from some drivers who fell victims. It was during an argument with a driver that one of the task force men opened fire."

Another rider, Chinedu Okonkwo, explained that in the ensuing confusion some of the riders took to their heels, while others struggled to free their



■ The task force members and some *okada* riders at Rainbow bus stop, Amuwo Odofin, Lagos on Monday

motorcycles from the grip of the task force men.

He said, "The task force men opened fire to scare away those who had gathered around to attack them. It was in the process that two persons sustained gunshot wounds."

But in a swift reaction, the Chairman of the task force, Shola Jejeloye, dismissed the claims, saying that the news was circulated by mischief makers.

He said, "The attention of the Lagos State Task Force has

been drawn to a purported claim making the rounds that the officials of the agency were involved in a shootout at Second Rainbow Bus Stop in Amuwo Odofin during an enforcement for compliance yesterday targeted at *Okada* operators which left one unidentified person dead.

"There is no iota of truth in the report as the operation carried out was smooth and seamless up to the point when the team left the scene.

"Activities of the Lagos State Task Force are carried out with the highest degree of civility and caution because we are dealing with human lives. We have been to Second Rainbow more than three times this year to carry out enforcement and have never recorded any injury, talk more of loss of life. There was no provocation at all during yesterday's exercise, so the claim that we fired live ammunition at *Okada* operators is completely false."