

# Four feared dead as traffic officials, hoodlums clash in Lagos

**FOUR** persons were feared dead yesterday during a clash between some suspected hoodlums and officials of the Lagos State Transport Management Authority (LASTMA) at the Ojota Bus Stop of the metropolis.

The clash was allegedly caused by an attempt by the hoodlums to prevent the LASTMA officials from arresting commercial bus drivers who were obstructing traffic by picking passengers on the highway.

*The Guardian* learnt that five people were crushed by a Danfo bus conveying bottle-throwing hoodlums who felt threatened by the action of the LASTMA officials led by the agency's Assis-

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tant Head of Operations, Mr. Etti Ibrahim. Two of the victims died instantly while another two gave up the ghost while being rushed to a nearby hospital.

Before the crisis broke out, LASTMA officials in company of some mobile policemen had commenced an operation in the Ojota area to stop commercial vehicles from picking passengers on the highway. The move was a part of efforts of the agency to ensure free flow of traffic in the Yuletide season.

In the exercise, which started at about 8 a.m., commercial bus drivers

were restricted to the service lane for about an hour. The exercise was hitch-free until the miscreants suspected to be members of the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) from Ketu started throwing bottles at the traffic officials.

The pandemonium that ensued saw commuters scampering for safety, during which the victims were crushed.

Speaking on the incident, Ibrahim expressed optimism that the authority would continue to force motorists to comply with relevant traffic laws.

He called for more security back up for LAST-

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## Supreme Court plans quick verdict

# Four die in Lagos clash

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MA personnel to be able to check recalcitrant drivers in Lagos.

The incident was the second in three months in which hoodlums attacked LASTMA officials at Ojota for stopping commercial motorists from picking passengers on the highway.

The Lagos Commissioner of Police, Mr. Emmanuel Adebayo, quickly deployed anti-

riot policemen to the scene before peace return to the area. The bodies of the victims have been taken to the Ikeja General Hospital Mortuary.

The first set of policemen who arrived at the scene were attacked by the protesters before mobile policemen came to reinforce them.

In the last four months, officials of LASTMA have been at odd with commer-

cial bus drivers in the state.

The drivers have overtime complained of heavy fine imposed on them even when they did not commit serious offence. The amount which is usually written on a receipt ranges from N30,000 to N50,000. Failure to pay normally attracts more demurrage, which often cause more pains for the owners and operators of seized vehicles.

to get accelerated hearing