

# Two feared dead in Ijesha, Lagos morning fracas

**T**WO young men were feared dead yesterday in the Gbadamoshi Bus area of Ijesha, Surulere, Lagos.

Residents of the area woke up to sounds of sporadic gun fire around Gbadamoshi Bus Stop on Ijesha Road at about 8.51 a.m. Youths numbering about 50 had laid siege to a gigantic storey building

opposite Gbadamoshi Bus Stop. They were demanding the owner of the edifice identified as Nze Max, a businessman who deals in motor and generator spare parts, shoes and clothing.

*The Guardian* who was at the scene of the incident till the siege ended at about mid-day, gathered from residents that a certain young man named Ike, a former worker

By Justin Akpovi-Esade

of Nze Max, was allegedly caught trying to steal from the warehouse at the basement of storey building some days ago. On the orders of the manager of the company, he was handed over to the dreaded Oodua People's Congress (OPC) vigilance group who allegedly tortured the man for days until Nze Max who was on a business trip returned and ordered that the boy be released from the OPC "cell".

"Hell broke lose this morning (yesterday) when Ike died because when he was released, he was badly bruised, his legs swollen. So thetouts in the area, because Ike enjoyed their sympathy, are here to demand justice,"

another witness identified as Wike, said.

In no time, the corpse of Ike was practically dragged into the scene and dumped in front of the building. At first, it was repeated chant by the youths for Nze Max to come down from his seeming fortress. When they started hurling missiles at the building, it became clear that they meant business.

Systematically, the sliding doors and windows started shattering on contact with the stones. Then, suddenly, heavy gunfire erupted from the top floor of the building, causing the large crowd that had taken over Ijesha Road, to scamper to a safe distance.

It took less than 10 minutes

for the angered youths to start returning gun fire. The shooting continued unabated for over 10 minutes.

Itire Police Division is less than three minutes' drive from the scene of the incidence but by 10.00 a.m., over two hours into the fracas even against the background of heavy gunfire, no policeman showed up.

After the gunfire seized, another youth named Onyeka who Wike claimed he saw in the morning running to the scene, laid dead.

This infuriated the attackers who began setting ablaze all the five cars parked in front of the building.

Attempts by some people who hid on the top floor to pour water on the burning

cars were fruitless.

Then some policemen and soldiers arrived the scene about 11.00 a.m.

Attempts aimed at persuading Nze Max to come down from the impenetrable fortress, failed. They resolved to break into the house, with the assistance of the irate youths. At intervals, the soldiers fired sporadically into the air to scare away the advancing crowd.

Finally, they got the owner of the house arrested at about noon and then the unthinkable happened! The policemen and soldiers left the scene immediately after taking Nze Max into their custody and left the whole edifice at the mercy of touts who had a field day looting

everything in the warehouse to the residential apartments.

As at 1.00 p.m., young men, women and children were busy carting away goods such as television, second hand car engines, electric generators, rugs, fans, shoes, boxes and even mattresses.

The Ijesha Road around Gbadamoshi Bus Stop, a major road that links Lawanson and Ojuelegba, was closed to vehicular and human traffic all through the incidence. Commercial as well as private cars had to make a diversion through Ogumuyiwa through to Adedeji Bus Stop.

Nothing was left in the big house when the looters were through at about 2.00 p.m.

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