

# One dies in Akure transport workers' clash

THERE was pandemonium in Akure yesterday as the two factions of the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW), Ondo State council turned almost all the streets into a battle ground over who occupied the chairmanship position of the union in the state. At the end of the crisis, one person was found dead while several others received various degrees of injuries.

*The Guardian* also learnt yesterday that many vehicles were destroyed in the fierce battle and residents of Akure hurriedly closed their shops and offices and ran for safety.

Already, the state police command has dispatched a team of anti-riot policemen and detectives to all strategic areas of the town

*From Julius Alabi, Akure*

to maintain law and order as no fewer than 20 people have been arrested in connection with the clash.

A witness told *The Guardian* in Akure yesterday that a fraction of the union stormed the state secretariat of the NURTW located along Ado-Owo road in Akure demanding the immediate resignation of the incumbent chairman whom they said his tenure had expired few months ago.

It was learnt that decorum was thrown into the air when the two factions engaged in a fight for supremacy, throwing the entire city into panic.

The fight spread from the union's secretariat to other parts of the state capital and nearly caused com-

motion at the state High Court premises, venue of the Election Petitions Tribunal, during the sitting of the tribunal.

During the fracas, one of the vehicles used by the union's hoodlums to pursue their rival members knocked down a middle-aged woman along the High Court road killing her instantly.

A team of police officers led by the state Commissioner of Police, Sheu Babalola later got to the scene and arrested some of the hoodlums.

For about three hours thereafter, the whole stretch of road leading to the High Court area, through Oba Adesida and NEPA junction was cordoned-off by mobile policemen to forestall further breakdown of law and

order.

Earlier in the day, the state Deputy Governor, Otunba Omolade Oluwatu, had called the two factions to a meeting to broker peace between them as they agreed to settle their difference.

According to the Chief Press Secretary to Oluwatu, Williams Olufunmi, the deputy governor invited the leaders of the two factions to his office and pleaded with them to maintain peace among their members.

The Police Public Relations Officer, Mr. Ademiranran Aremu (ASP) confirmed that some of the hoodlums who were found with dangerous weapons have been arrested by the police. He assured that the town had regained its calm.