

# Three feared killed as drivers, traders clash in Ekiti

From Muyiwa Adeyemi (Head South West Bureau Ado Ekiti)

**UNCONFIRMED** reports said three people were feared killed yesterday as the fragile peace reigning in Ado Ekiti, Ekiti State capital was shattered when members of National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) led some hoodlums to attack Hausa traders.

Many people were left wounded and properties worthy millions of naira destroyed and burnt in the mayhem.

Commercial and business activities were grounded in the tension generated

in the violence where dangerous weapons were freely used. Schools hurriedly closed with sent pupils back home.

A source said that trouble began on Tuesday night when a bag belonging to a wife of the chieftain of the NURTW was snatched by unknown persons along Ijigbo Old Garage Area of the city and escaped into Atikankan, a community dominated by Hausas.

The source said cases of bag snatching had been a recurring incident in the area, with the suspect allegedly being protected by the traders at

Atikankan.

However, most hit were Atikankan area where there is huge concentration of Hausa settlers as well as Oja-Oba, (kings market), Old Garage and New Garage, believed to be central trading places of the Hausas.

During the violence, no fewer than nine vehicles were vandalized and their windscreens smashed while about twenty houses and offices were either completely burnt or vandalized.

Anti-riot policemen, men of the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps

and other security agents were in the market and were working hard to control the situation.

A cameraman with the Core Television, Mr. Sunday Adigun, who was beaten by the mob and was seriously injured, is currently receiving treatment in the hospital.

Some hoodlums, wielding cutlasses and broken bottles also took advantage of the crisis to loot shops and attack local bureau de change in the community.

It took the personal intervention of the newly posted Ekiti State Police

Commissioner, Mr. Etop John James who led scores of both regular and mobile men to the trouble spots before the mob retreated.

The new Police boss expressed regrets over the incidence and vowed to restore normalcy in no time.

James said he expected people of the state to give him the honour of information before going to the streets, knowing fully well that he just resumed on Tuesday on the orders of the IGP over the spate of kidnapping and other crimes in the state.

Public Relations Officer of Ekiti State Police Command, Mr. Alberto Adeyemi, however did not confirm the death of anyone in the fracas, but said that four persons were injured and were receiving treatment at an undisclosed hospital in the state capital.

Police sources on the field lamented that a fire truck that had gone to put out the fire in the market was prevented from carrying out the duty and said, "This does not speak well of the people as they have taken the crisis too far."

The state government has sued for peace and announced that it had started moves to ensure that normalcy was returned in the market and in the state capital.

Chief of Staff to the state governor, Chief Dipo Anisulowo, who visited the scene, told newsmen "a committee would be set up to look into the crisis with the aim to finding a lasting solution to the problem and also nip a re-occurrence in the bud."