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Metro

## Task force van kills three in Lagos market

By Odita Sunday and  
Wasiu Salami

09 February 2018 | 4:28  
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Scene of the incident yesterday with an ambulance taking away some of the injured. PHOTO: WASIU SALAMI

For more than an hour, there were tense scenes in Mushin area of Lagos State after motorcycle riders clashed with the Lagos State Environmental Task Force, which left three people dead.

The deceased were identified as one Medinat, an apprentice hairdresser, and an elderly woman, who was passing by. Three others, including a trader, also sustained injuries.

Scene of the incident was the popular Ojuwoye Market, on Agege Motor Road, Mushin, which had come alive after 10:00a.m. due to the weekly sanitation by the traders, which is done every Thursday. Rather than the usual scene of people milling around the market, it was a no-go area as policemen, task force officials and men of the Lagos State Emergency Management Authorities (LASEMA) took over. Those who dared to pass through the troubled spot had to lift their two hands above their heads.

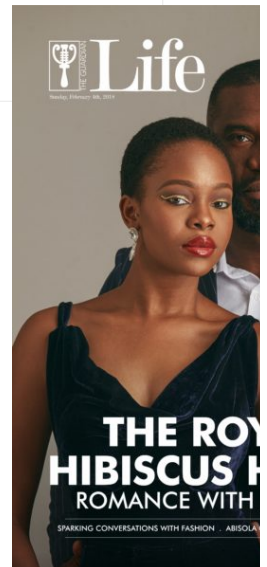


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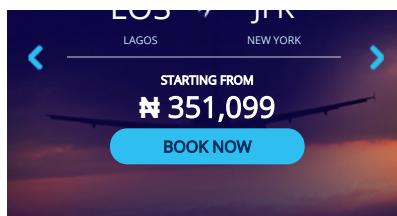
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An eyewitness said an out-of-control enforcement vehicle ran into the Ojuwoye Market leading to chaos. Armed policemen afterwards fired teargas canisters and birdshots to disperse the crowd and close the market.

According to eyewitnesses, the task force had come in the morning and arrested some motorcycle operators, but they met some resistance when some hoodlums rushed out of the market throwing stones and attacking officials of the Lagos Environmental Sanitation Corps (LAGESC). Policemen attached to the task force responded to the attack by shooting at the attackers. As the driver of the LAGESC black maria tried desperately to run for his life with the van, he drove into the crowd and crushed some people.

Many people were seriously injured while two persons were trapped under the vehicle and were unconscious but not confirmed dead by the LASEMA officers who immediately took them to Lagos University Teaching Hospital (LUTH), Idi Araba. Three officers of the task force and two LAGSEC officials were also injured. Sources said the market would remain closed until the people who launched the attack are arrested.

A police source at Mushin told The Guardian that the driver of the van in the process of running for his life accidentally knocked down two persons. "One died and the other is still alive. The clash was between men of the Lagos State task force and the motorcycle riders who were aggressive against the task force officials for seizing their motorcycles. They attacked some of the officials with dangerous weapons."

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