



Metro

## Three killed, police DCO injured during Buhari's victory celebration in Lagos

By Odita Sunday

28 February 2019 | 3:47 am



[FILE PHOTO] Nigeria police

Three persons were yesterday killed and many others, including policemen, injured after violence broke out at Alaba Rago, Ojo area in Lagos State.

Scores of miscreants had gone on rampage, attacking traders and other road users while celebrating the victory of President Muhammadu Buhari.

It was gathered that the violence erupted at Okokomaiko before noon when youths in their hundreds stormed the expressway in celebration of Buhari's declaration as winner of last Saturday's presidential election by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

According to sources, the youths armed with cutlasses and bottles sang songs of victory from Alaba Rago and marched towards Okokomaiko, blocking the entire expressway and challenging other road users. They were said to have resorted to violence at Okokomaiko, thereby attacking traders and vandalizing their shops as 'punishment' for not supporting the president.

Also, an unknown gunman yesterday shot into a crowd celebrating President Buhari's re-election in Sabo, Yaba, killing one person.

A woman who identified herself as Blessing said: "They came from Alaba Rago and were celebrating President Buhari's victory. They were also shouting Sai Baba and marching towards Okokomaiko. But as soon as they got to Okokomaiko, they started destroying traders' wares and this made the traders to run for their lives.

"They were a little over the top, doing bike stunts, causing traffic, and pouring powder/paint substances on people. They were stealing, beating, fighting and chasing people in a senseless jubilation.

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Tajudeen Muyideen, a commercial bus driver said that he made a frantic U-turn when he sighted the blockage erected by the hoodlums, who were armed with cutlasses, clubs and daggers, challenging other road users.

Chiamaka Udemadu, a trader at Alaba International market, said the news of the fracas forced traders to close shops. She said unconfirmed reports claimed two persons died while many others, including a policeman, sustained varying degree of injuries.

Another trader at Okokomaiko said over a hundred hoodlums matched from Alaba to Okokomaiko, singing songs of victory to celebrate the president's win at the polls. "They matched to the police division and when policemen on guard tried to stop them, they attacked the hoodlums. I heard gunshots and was told a policeman was killed. It was the army that restored peace in the area," she said.

A meat seller, Sule, condemned the violence, lamenting that it made it impossible for him to ply his trade. "I am from the north and those who caused this crisis are also from the north. I have not sold anything since morning. What will I do with all this meat now?" he lamented.

A motorcyclist said policemen made some arrest when they got to the scene, but alleged that those arrested were innocent bystanders and not the perpetrators of the violence.

At the time of this report, policemen from the Rapid Response Squad (RRS), Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) and soldiers were still at the scene. An RRS helicopter was also hovering the area.

Meanwhile the police averted a clash between hoodlums in Lagos Island yesterday morning after some thugs attempted to obstruct Igbo traders from opening their shops.

The hoodlums stormed Oluwole, Nnamdi Azikwe, Tinubu, Bamgbose and Alli Streets at about 9:00a.m. accusing traders of not voting their preferred candidates during the last election. They were however confronted by another faction who found their actions to be provocative and in bad taste.

It was gathered that both factions engaged in a heated brawl and were close to attacking each other when policemen from Area A Command intervened.

When contacted, police spokesman, Chike Oti, a Chief Superintendent (CSP), said 37 suspects were arrested at the Alaba Rago incident, adding that investigation had commenced. Oti confirmed that the hoodlums attacked police vehicles and injured personnel who made to take them off the highways.

He said: "Some youths blocked the highway and information was sent to the police. Policemen on traffic control duty were deployed and they tried to get them to leave the road but they attacked the policemen. Some policemen sustained injuries. Reinforcement was dispatched to the scene and 37 persons were arrested. Investigation is ongoing.

Oti said policemen, led by the DCO, SP Sunday Oyekanmi, were appealing to the youths as they were causing heavy traffic on the highway. He said while the policemen were

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where he was revived. He is responding to treatment now. He is not dead. The area is now calm. The Commissioner of Police, CP Zubairu Muazu, has warned that the command will not tolerate any attack of his men who are working to protect lives and property in Lagos,” Oti said.

He added: “There was no crisis at Lagos Island. What happened was that hoodlums were about to confront themselves and policemen were quickly deployed to avoid any incident.”

It would be recalled that on Monday, Igbo traders were also prevented from opening their shops for business at Oshodi market for not voting for the All Progressive Congress (APC) candidates last weekend.

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