

# One dead, many injured in fresh Lagos NURTW crisis

By Odita Sunday

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The fragile peace that ensued among rival groups of the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) in Lagos State since the January stabbing of NURTW leader, Musiliu Akinsanya, a.k.a. M.C. Oluomo at the APC rally, was at the weekend shattered, leading to death of one and maiming of many other members of the body.

The clash took place between the rival members of the union in Apapa Iganmu area of the state. It was reported that the two rival groups supporting the elected national president, Alhaji Tajudeen Ibikunle Baruwa and the Lagos chairman, Alhaji Tajudeen Agbede.

It was gathered that the clash, which took place on Friday evening saw market women, commercial vehicle operators, and private car owners running for their lives, when a faction linked to Alhaji Baruwa, headed by Comrade Sulaimon Kudeti, branch chairman B, Apapa, blocked the main road at Ijora 7-Up area, to celebrate the emergence of the newly elected national president of the NURTW, Alhaji Tajudeen Baruwa, who defeated Alhaji Tajudeen Agbede's faction in the just concluded election of the union in Abuja.

It was further gathered that members of the other faction belonging to Agbede on the same day also organized a separate party in honour of their leader at NURTW secretariat, Oko-Oba, Agege. The union members allegedly refused to get the approval from both the police and the Apapa-Iganmu local council before they blocked the road for the party. The attack on Agbede's faction, with dangerous arms and ammunition by the Baruwa group, a source said, caused severe injuries on members linked to Agbede.

Based on credible information from members of the public, the Divisional Police Officer (DPO), Ijora Police Station, Chief Superintendent of Police (CSP) Akinola Olufemi, swung into action with his men to arrest the situation from degenerating into full-blown crisis. The police subsequently rushed the injured members, including Yusuf Rilwan, Rasheed Olaiya, Hammed Adeniyi and Rilwan Isiaka, to Randle General Hospital, Apapa, road for treatment.



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One of the victims, Yusuf Rilwan, who was stabbed with knife and soaked with blood, was referred to Federal Medical Centre (FMC) in Surulere, for medical attention, where he later died. According to Comrade Oyetakin (a.k.a School boy), the chairman, Tricycle Owners' Association of Nigeria (TROAN), Apapa Branch, "there are two factions of NURTW in Lagos; we have Alhaji Tajudeen Agbede and Alhaji Tajudeen Ibikunle Baruwa factions.

"On Thursday, when news reached us that Alhaji Baruwa had been announced as the winner of NURTW election in Abuja, our members on Friday, who belonged to the

Baruwa group, led by M.C Oluomo and Sulaiman Kudeti, organized an open party at the main road, which caused heavy traffic in Ijora Badia to celebrate the winning team.

“Initially, our leader, Agbede, had earlier called us that our team had lost the chairmanship position, and as result, we should remain peaceful in our various branches in the state and that if anybody wants to make an attempt to fight us, we should report such to the police.



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“Because of the party, Comrade Kudeti invited one Lukmon Alabi (a.k.a Mobil), a wanted and dreaded killer in Surulere to attack our members. Our members did not intend to attack them based on the instruction given to us by our leader to remain peaceful. Our members were at the state NURTW secretariat in Oko-Oba, Agege.

“However, when Alabi arrived the place, he started looking for our members; immediately he saw some of them at the office, he started throwing bottles and shooting sporadically at them. In the process many of them were injured. But the most painful thing is that, this is not the first time things like this had happened. We cannot continue with this injustice, the police authorities should intervene and stop its biased investigations,” he said.

