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One killed, policemen injured, vehicles burnt as Police, Yoruba Nation activists clash in Ojota

From Seye Oluamide, South-West Bureau Chief, (Ibadan) and Eniola Daniel, (Lagos)

Fasehun, Adams' factions of OPC deny involvement in fracas

ALMOST two years after a sales girl, Jumoke Oyeleke was shot dead by a member of the Nigeria Police Force in Ojota, Lagos, during a Yoruba Nation Rally, a young man was yesterday reportedly killed in the same area. While the unidentified man was reported killed by the Police, the Lagos State Police Command has denied responsibility but promised to investigate.

The Yoruba Nation group had planned to hold a mega rally at Ojota to press for self-determination but it ended up in a clash that resulted in burning of vehicles, inflicting injuries on a police and murder.

It was claimed that trouble started when police arrived the scene and shot teargas to disperse the crowd.

In a video that went viral, a young man was seen alleging the death of two members of the group and threatening to set police station in Ojota ablaze.

When contacted, Lagos State Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Superintendent of Police (SP) Benjamin Hundeyin, said the police never shot anyone but went there to disperse the gathering and maintain order.

"Miscreants masquerading as Yoruba Nation Agitators came out in their hundreds, disrupting social and commercial activities at Ojota.

"A team of police officers, comprising Alausa Division and the Rapid Response

Squad (RRS) promptly stepped in to disperse the unlawful gathering and prevent a breakdown of law and order. The miscreants attacked the police, shooting, and destroyed two vehicles in the process. "One person has been confirmed dead, while two police officers shot by the miscreants are currently receiving treatment. Four suspects have been arrested and investigations have commenced.

"Meanwhile, normalcy has been restored to the area. Lagosians should go about

their lawful businesses as measures have been put in place to prevent further breakdown of law and order; and keen monitoring of the situation continues. "It is imperative to state unequivocally that the Lagos State Police Command will not allow any person or group of persons, under whatever guise, disrupt the peace currently enjoyed in the State. "Contrary to the report that many were killed during the fracas, I have the record of one.

"They did not inform us

that they were going to be in Ojota before the gathering, it was an unlawful gathering.

"We acted professionally, did what we needed to do. We got wind of the fact that some people were disrupting activities and we went there. We were careful not to use excessive force; the police did not kill the person that died. We did well and we are investigating the cause of the death of the people killed.

"We are also working on the video of the young man that threatened to set our

station ablaze.

MEANWHILE, the late Dr. Frederick Fasehun and Gani Adams factions of Oodua People's Congress (OPC), yesterday, dismissed as untrue the news that their members were involved in the crisis that erupted in Ojota, Lagos.

In separate statements, National Coordinator of OPC/Aare Ona Kakanfo of Yorubaland, Iba Adams and President of OPC, Otunba Wasiu Afolabi, said the socio-cultural organisation(s) were not at all part of the unrest that reportedly broke out between police and sus-

pected Yoruba nation agitators.

Reacting to reports that members of the OPC were part of the groups that organised the rally, Adams, said the rally came as a surprise and it kept everybody unawares. "None of our member were part of the crisis.

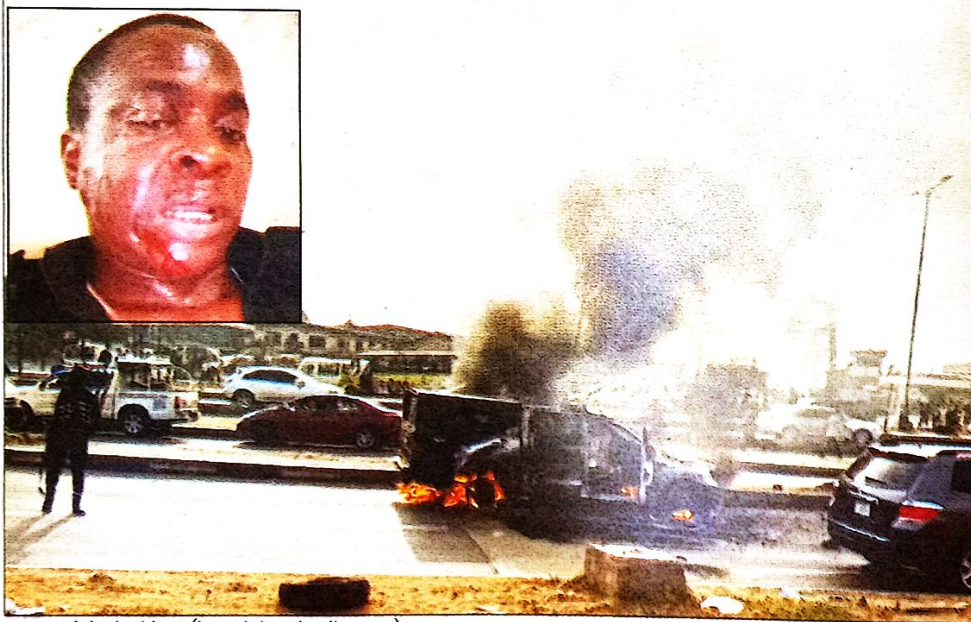
"Let me clear the air on the crisis in Ojota yesterday morning. There were unconfirmed reports linking members of the OPC to the mayhem. I want to state it clearly that none of our members were at the scene of the incident.

"OPC is not against the liberation of Yoruba race, however, it is a fact that the struggle for the liberation of Yoruba race is an inalienable right of all Yoruba to champion. We are not part of the peaceful rally held in Ojota.

"Our position on regionalism is very clear. It is sacrosanct, because that is what we are seeking at the moment. Nigeria should be restructured to full regional autonomy, where each region will be at liberty to operate at their own pace. It is unfortunate that the report was done in bad faith to discredit our organisation."

"Just like any other person, we heard news of the disturbance through the social media. When I made phone calls to my members around the axis and elsewhere, they said they knew nothing about the incident."

"Nobody should drag OPC into a matter that does not concern us and today's problem is none of our business," the OPC President said.



scene of the incident (inset injured policeman)