

Transport Unions' Clash Claims One At Iyana-Ipaja

By Wisdom Patrick
SENIOR CORRESPONDENT, Lagos

One person was feared dead at Iyana-Ipaja in Lagos on Wednesday when two rival transport unions clashed in the late morning downpour.

Several others were injured and were rushed to a private hospital.

It was difficult to get the true cause of the clash at press time, but a witness who gave his name as Samson Obioma said a member of the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) stabbed one person. He added that the victim died on the spot.

But another witness dismissed his claims, stating that though people were injured, "to the best of my knowledge, nobody died".

It was learnt that the face-off was

between the NURTW and the Road Transport Owners Association of Nigeria (RTOAN).

The rival unions, according to witnesses, were fighting over collection of toll from vehicles who pick passengers at a section demarcated by the Federal Road Maintenance Agency (FERMA).

Sources said since FERMA officials left the highway, members of the NURTW have been collecting money from commercial motorists using the demarcated section of the road.

"I don't know what happened that RTOAN members said they wanted to be collecting the toll but the NURTW members did not agree with them. That was how the clash started," another witness

said.

Although policemen from Idimu and Ipaja police stations raced to the scene and put the situation under control, there are fears that the clash could spread to other areas like Ipaja, Egbeda and Idimu.

The state Police Public Relations Officer, Olubode Ojajuni, said the situation had been brought under control.

"Even though I am yet to be briefed by the relevant Divisional Police Officer (DPO), I am very sure that the situation has been put under control by our men. So there is nothing to fear," he said.

The police spokesperson could not also confirm whether anybody died in the clash.