

South West

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Seven feared dead in Ogun NURTW clash

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AT least seven people were feared dead yesterday in Sango-Ota, Ogun State when factional members of National Union of Road Transport Union (NURTW) engaged one another in an early morning violent clash over control of motor parks in the state.

The mayhem on Monday reportedly began by 4am and brought vehicular movements and commercial activities to a standstill for greater part of the day, as police and other law enforcement agencies strove to maintain law and order.

During the clash, residents, market men and women as

well as pedestrians were taken aback at the brazen manner at which members of the union freely used dangerous weapons, such as guns, charms and other lethal weapons on one another.

The violence, it was gathered, came barely 24 hours after an Abeokuta High Court struck out an application challenging the conduct of a proposed election by a faction of the union in the state.

It would be recalled that NURTW members in the state had engaged each other in a protracted crisis following the failed attempt to conduct fresh election of the union executive upon the expiration of the tenure of the present executive under the leadership

of Chief Tajudeen Ibikunle (aka Baruwa). The development subsequently resulted in litigation where some aggrieved members approached the state High Court, Abeokuta where Justice Peter Onamade later ruled that the union go ahead with the conduct of the election earlier aborted.

However, men of the Nigerian Police force has been able to restore normalcy to the area as fierce looking men of the anti-riot police team had been drafted to the scene.

When contacted, the state police Public Relation Officer (PPRO), Muiyiwa Adejobi confirmed the violent clash but described it as minor.

But he declined to give the accurate figure of the casualties

until the report of the Divisional police Officer (DPO) in the area which is to be backed up by a doctor's reports, certifying the number of the dead was received by the command.

It was learnt that similar crisis was believed to have been responsible for the violence in Ijebu - Ode which prompted the state government to slam an indefinite ban on the union's activities in Ijebu-Ode.

A member of the Care-taker Committee set up to conduct the election, Alhaji Yusuf Bamgbola alleged that the aggrieved members under the leadership of "somebody called Akeem Balogun (Jango)" were responsible for the clash.

Bamgbola also told newsmen that his committee

had previously got wind of the violence and petitioned the state government, adding that nothing was done till it happened today.

"What I can say is that since last week, we got wind of the fact that some people were planning to cause chaos and commotion in Ogun State and I immediately wrote to the state governor to draw his attention to the illegal activities of some hoodlums who are parading themselves as members of National Union, using the name of some government functionaries, that they have given them the support and directives to go and invade motor parks".