

# Lekki toll: One feared dead in residents, police clash

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to begin today.

About 5,000 residents had stormed the Admiralty Plaza, at Admiralty Circle Plaza at Lekki-Eti-Osa to protest against the toll as early as 10 a.m. to register their displeasure on the government's plan to commence the toll despite the resistance by residents in the area that led to the earliest postponement of the January 3, 2011 take off.

The protesters blocked the tolls, leaving only one lane for entry and exit to vehicles plying through the corridor.

There was a heavy presence of policemen deployed by the state government to curtail the activities of the protesters.

The peaceful protest was, however, brought to an abrupt end when some thugs emerged from nowhere and started throwing pure water at the policemen.

In a defensive move, the anti-riot policemen, led by Commander of the state Rapid Response Squad (RRS), Hakeem Odumosu fired tear gas canisters to disperse the teeming protesters.

The police allegedly threw canisters at the protesters arresting many of them in the process.

According to sources, no fewer than 18 people were said

to have been arrested by the police and taken to Maroko Police Station before they were later transferred to State Criminal Investigation Department (SCID), Pantti, Lagos.

Following this development, those that escaped arrest narrated their ugly experiences, saying the police and some unidentified miscreants manhandled and attacked them during the peaceful protest.

Two Video Cameras belonging to Mr. Sunday Alamba of Associated Press and Mr. Maxwell Kupe of Silver-Bird Television, tape recorder of Richard Edoki of Rhythm 93.7FM were seized by alleged unidentified miscreants belonging to one of the popular land owners in the area.

Among those arrested were, the chairman of Lekki Phase 1 Residents Association, Mr. Wole Akala and another resident association Chairman, Mr. Martin Eze among other chairmen and residents.

A concerned resident and Human Rights Lawyer, Ebun-Olu Adegboruwa who had been in the forefront of the protest from last year, vowed that nothing will stop the aggrieved residents from continuing with their peaceful protests.

Adegboruwa confirmed the arrest and detention of residents at SCID, Pantti.

Speaking to newsmen, Adegboruwa narrated his ordeal: "A

man was shot and was left lying in the pool of his own blood and he has been reported dead. Kate Henshaw, an actress was beaten and manhandled. The cameraman of Silverbird Television was beaten black and blue and his camera seized. The chairman of Lekki Phase one resident association, Mr. Wole Akala and another chairman Mr. Martin Eze and others who were within the Lekki zone were ambushed and arrested as slaves. They are now being taken from The Maroko Police Station to Pantti. They were denied access to their families or their lawyers and we are afraid because we do not know the destination or the purpose for which they were being taken away. Armed policemen took over Lekki Phase One Estate, which is a private residence. They have pursued the residents into their private homes. The policemen barricaded everywhere and turned Lekki Phase 1 into an ungovernable area. This is barbaric, this is illegal. We are operating under a democratic system. Governor Fashola being a SAN has displayed total disrespect for the rule of law, he has displayed class intolerance for democratic system, and he does not deserve to rule this state. He is not a democrat, he signed an agreement with LCC to provide an

alternative road, he cannot fulfill that agreement, he does not deserve the respect and support of the people and residents of Lagos State, so all of us have teamed up together and we are calling on Fashola to resign. He does not deserve the moral respect and support of the people of Lagos state. He is a governor who cannot keep up to his word, he is not a democrat, he cannot unleash violence on the defenseless citizens, we are going to protest to the United Nations, ECOWAS, AU and National Human Rights Commission. As I speak to you now, we are sending photographs of people who were blooded to Youtube or to Facebook and we must expose the corruption and greed of Fashola regime and LCC. This road cannot be a toll gate, it is unconstitutional, the case is in court, and we demand for the people of Lagos State to rise up and challenge the undemocratic system that is being imposed on our people by Fashola administration. We are coming out again, the toll cannot be collected."

Adegboruwa also flayed the government for describing the protest as politically-motivated, challenging the government to come out and name any politician behind the ordeal.

"I am not a politician, neither am I affiliated to any party, I am prosecuting this case with

my money, and I make bold to say that those arrested are residents. Government should admit that it is not politically-motivated. One person has been confirmed dead and we put his death on the head of Governor Fashola," Adegboruwa said.

Meanwhile, the Special Adviser to the Governor on Information and Strategy, Lateef Raji when contacted said calm had returned to the area.

Raji said people are entitled to embark on peaceful protest since Governor Fashola is a man that believes in the rule of law and a true democrat.

Also, Commissioner for Information and Strategy, Ademola Ibiroga regretted that the protest turned violent and restated government commitment to maintenance of law and order.

He disclosed that the governor had ordered for investigation into the alleged brutality of the protesters with a view to determining the veracity of the claim as well as bringing the culprits to justice.

The Lekki Concession Company, LCC, the concessionaire of the road, commenced collection of toll on the 49 Kilometre road from 12 midnight today.

The toll to be collected by the LCC ranges from N120 for Saloon cars and tricycles N50 for motorcycles and N300 for heavy-duty vehicles.