

## NEWS

# Mob attacks bank over Lagos resident's death

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**A**KOWONJO, a Lagos suburb, erupted in violence yesterday as people protested the killing of an 'area boy' by the police.

Four cars were burnt while two others were damaged by rampaging youths who also attacked a branch of a bank. The bank's security post was destroyed.

Three persons were also feared killed at another incident in Oshodi where policemen raided some black spots.

There were, however, conflicting reports on the cause of the Akonwojo incident.

While some eyewitnesses said a robbery attack on the bank sparked off the protest, the police attributed the incident to a clash between two factions of 'area boys'.

A source said some irate youths, wielding weapons, were sighted advancing toward the bank, chanting war songs.

In a bid to secure the bank, armed riot policemen on duty, allegedly shot at the youths, killing one of them on the spot.

This, our correspondent gathered, infuriated others who mobilised to attack the bank.

Sensing danger, the policemen sent a distress call to police authorities for reinforcement.

A truckload of armed riot policemen was drafted to the scene.

Angered by their inability to gain access to the bank, the mob reportedly torched the



• The vandalised branch of the bank... yesterday

compound which resulted in the burning of the cars.

Firefighters from the Ikeja Fire Station put out the fire from the cars.

Some parts of the bank's building were destroyed.

Another version had it that an 'area boy' with the nickname Maintain went looking for one Gani, who was said to have appropriated some money given to them by *fuji* musician, Pasuma Wonder, when he performed at a hotel last Friday.

Maintain was said to have brandished an iron rod when he stormed the hotel where Gani usually parked his car.

When efforts by the hotel staff to stop him failed, they reportedly sought the assistance of in the riot policemen, who were inside the bank.

According to Innocent Onugo, the hotel superintendent, Maintain charged at one of the policemen, and in the ensuing scuffle, another riot policeman shot Maintain in the stomach. He died a few minutes later on the Akowonjo Road.

The death of Maintain, who lived in the neighbourhood, and whose wife was said to have recently put to bed, drew the ire of the residents.

The situation led to the closure

of the bank to customers.

Some 'area boys' have been arrested.

In the Oshodi incident, the three persons were feared killed when policemen attached to the Rapid Response Squad clashed with men suspected to be soldiers and 'area boys' during the raid.

The victims were reportedly killed in a cross fire while scores of traders, customers and pedestrians were injured.

A truck load of riot policemen from PMF 22 was sighted leaving their Ikeja base for the scene of the clash.

Commercial activities were paralysed as shops owners

hurriedly closed and scampered for safety.

Commuters were stranded as commercial motorists avoided the area.

The police spokesman, Mr. Frank Mba, said the victim in Akonwojo died while struggling to snatch one of the policemen's rifles.

"It will be difficult to accuse anybody of shooting the deceased since we cannot ascertain who pulled the trigger between him and the policeman whose rifle he was attempting to snatch," Mba said.

On the Oshodi incident, he said he had not been briefed.

PHOTOS: SOLOMON ADEOLA