

Five killed in Lagos clash

•Police declare gang leader wanted

By Jude Isiguzo and Precius Igbonwelundu

FIVE persons were killed in Bariga, Lagos, yesterday when factions of street urchins clashed over the control of a canoe park.

But the police said only two people died.

It was learnt that the factions were those of the Baale of Ilaje, Mr Kayode Aiyetiwa, and the son of the former Baale, Mr Segun Opere, popularly called Shaggy.

The men in Aiyetiwa's faction are called "Downtown Boys" and those of Opere "Shaggy Boys".

Sources said over 15 persons might have been killed in the clash, which lasted for over three hours.

The hoodlums were said to have stormed the canoe park on Thursday to overthrow the toll collectors.

Their action was resisted, leading to a free-for-all.

It was learnt that the fracas continued on Friday, when two persons were reportedly killed.

The fight continued on Saturday till Sunday morning, resulting in the death of three others.

Residents said the fight started three days ago and that five persons have been killed.

A resident, Segun Alao, told *The Nation* that the hoodlums have been terrorising the area for nearly a week, adding that policemen in the area know them but have failed to arrest them.

Alao said: "Since Friday, about five people have been killed. We have not rested and have been living in fear. The most annoying thing is that policemen know these boys but have refused to arrest them. Whenever they come around, the policemen would go. We no longer understand what is going on."

Commercial and vehicular activities have been halted as the residents scamped for safety to avoid being hit by stray bullets from the guns of the warring hoodlums.

The police later intervened.

Sources said the clash, which started around 8am, disturbed worshippers during church service.

Police spokeswoman, Ngozi Braide, confirmed the incident.

She said only two persons were killed while two others were injured and are currently receiving treatment in a hospital.

Braide said the clash followed a disagreement on which faction would collect the revenue from that particular canon park.

She said no suspect has been arrested and that policemen were still keeping the peace.

The Police Command has declared wanted one of the members of the factions, simply identified as Ibrahim, popularly called "Small Jaypron".

The police alleged that Ibrahim, with other members of the "Downtown Boys", was responsible for a robbery operation in Ilaje, Bariga, in which three hoodlums were killed last Thursday.

Some of the gang members, who reportedly escaped, have threatened to carry out reprisals on policemen attached to the Bariga Police Division.

The Nation learnt that the slain robbers, identified as Austin, Idi and Tunde, were members of "Downtown Boys". The police alleged that the gang was responsible for series of crimes in Somolu, Lagos.

The police said the hoodlums, who were killed on Ilaje Street, Bariga, were led by "Small Jaypron".

A senior police officer at the Bariga Division, who spoke in confidence, alleged that Austin was earlier arrested by the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) and charged to court. But he was said to have been granted bail.

The policeman said: "On June 6, he (Austin) and others at large stabbed Abiodun Azeez in the eye during a robbery operation on Abeokuta Street, Bariga, Lagos. We had been looking for him since then. But on Thursday, he ran out of luck when he engaged us in a fierce gun battle. He died during the shootout. But some of his gang members are still at large."

Braide said Ibrahim is wanted by the police.

She said: "They (hoodlums) are all young people who are fighting for the leadership of the park because of the revenue they normally get from there. We received a distress call that there was fighting in the area on Sunday morning. On getting there, the police found two bodies and three injured persons. The bodies were taken to mortuary while the injured have been taken to hospital."

Fayemi presents car gift to ex-Milad Ayeni

EKITI State Governor Kayode Fayemi has said his administration would continue to assist needy indigenes in whatsoever situation they find themselves.

The governor spoke in Lagos during the presentation of a brand new Toyota Avenis car to Navy Commodore Oladipupo Ayeni (rtd), the first Military Administrator (Milad) of Bayelsa State, who has been on wheel chair due to an illness after his appointment in 1996.

Fayemi, who was represented by the Permanent Secretary Political and Economic Affairs Department of the Governor's office, Mr. Olusola Dada, noted that the car would enable him to know that the state government and the people of Ekiti State have not forgotten him.

The governor said though the retired Commodore was a Military Administrator, he needed to be assisted, supported and cared for as a leader.

He added that this is not a departure from the culture, heritage and norms of the Yoruba to care for the needy.

Fayemi said Ekiti people realised Ayeni's contributions and achievements in Bayelsa State, adding that the car gift would show that the residents were also praying for him.

The governor said his administration has begun programmes that would banish poverty from the society and also ensure that those who have served the people do not suffer in their later years.

Ayeni was emotional in expressing his appreciation through personal Assistant; Mr. Oluwaranmi.

He thanked Fayemi for the kind gesture.

Commodore also prayed for the success of the administration.