



## Three feared dead as Ladipo traders fight contractor

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Ladipo market

Three persons were yesterday feared dead and over 20 wounded when Ladipo auto parts market traders clashed with a contractor engaged by Mushin Local Government.

The traders from the Bakassi section of the market wielded machetes and bottles, firing guns sporadically into the air as they trooped to the Apapa-Oshodi Expressway.

They harassed motorists and pedestrians and drove out the contractor's workers from the market.

They were initially dispersed by policemen, but returned after the police left.

The police returned to restore normalcy around 6pm.

The traders were fighting the contractor, which is reconstructing shops in Bakassi section because of the fear that they may lose their shops after the reconstruction.

Traders going home raised their hands before being allowed to pass through the troubled spot.

A trader said they were afraid because anytime such exercise is done, the original shop owners always lose out to the rich.

He cited the reconstructed Ladipo main market which he claimed had been hijacked by money-bags.

Another trader, Chukwuma said: "We are not against reconstruction or modernisation of our market, our fear is that our shops will be taken over by rich traders in the name of reconstructing the market. The contractor was a trader before he embarked on an exploitative reconstruction of the market to make money."

Another report said the crisis was caused by tussle over ownership of a portion of land in Bakassi.

It was gathered that armed thugs stormed the place to forcefully eject traders.

A trader, Chukwuebuka Kamsi, said: "There has been a lingering quarrel from a family that claims to be owner of the Aladura market popularly called Bakassi, at Ladipo and some residents/traders.

"Without any prior notice some thugs came at about 10am while we were just opening for the day and ordered everyone to pack their goods out. Not done, they started breaking bottles and threatening to kill anyone who refuses to leave. Some of us hurriedly closed our shops while others engaged them in a fight. It took the presence of armed policemen who fired sporadically into the air to disperse the thugs."

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