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Five killed as OPC members clash with gangs in Ibadan

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By Yinka Adeniran, Ibadan

No fewer than five persons were feared killed when members of the Oodua People's Congress (OPC) and rival gangs clashed in Ibadan, Oyo State, on Friday.

Two unidentified bodies were found around the Premier Hotel axis of Mokola hill road, while three members of the OPC were also confirmed dead.

An eyewitness said the two men whose bodies were found around Mokola hill were shot dead by men of the OPC late Thursday night.

The source who spoke in confidence attributed the killing of the men to a crisis that happened around Inalende area of Ibadan on Thursday.

It was said that no fewer than 11 youths had been killed in the clash between OPC and gangs of Inalende, Abebi and Oopo areas of Ibadan.

The clash started on Thursday.

Eyewitness accounts however differed on the number of casualties in the crisis. While some put the figure at six, others said eleven persons including seven members of the rival gangs and four OPC men died in the clash.

It was gathered that the clash had started since Wednesday when the youths from Inalende killed two people in Oopo with the support of the youths from Abebi.

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Two people were also allegedly killed on Wednesday in the Iwo-road area during a clash between shop owners and members of the Park Management System (PMS).

A source in the area who gave the nicknames of the first two victims as Transformer and Ishaja, disclosed that the two were killed on Thursday while casualties increased to eleven when members of OPC came out to support one of the rival gangs in the fight that lasted till Friday morning.

The sources explained that the clash which started as the usual confrontation between the youths in the affected areas got out of hand when OPC members supported one of the gangs.

It was gathered that the warring youths, who are still in the area had vowed to retaliate the killing of their members despite the heavy presence of the security agencies in the communities.

Describing the killings as a reprisal, a source said: "I am confirming it. I don't want you to mention my name. The two boys were down on Thursday while another four were killed overnight but as of this afternoon, the deaths have increased to eleven.

"Police and Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) are here to maintain peace but those guys are still threatening to retaliate. I wish the police can still reinforce our area to ensure more lives are not lost."

Contacted, the Oyo State Coordinator of OPC, Comrade Rotimi Olumo confirmed the death of three of his men with one presently in coma at an undisclosed hospital.

Although Olumo denied that his men had killed anyone, he said the gang leader in Oopo which he identified as Dare Jalaruru was the one who led the attack on his men.

Olumo said: "The OPC boys involved are our boys. We only heard of the matter at midnight Thursday. The Herald boys gathered around 12midnight (Thursday) that our boys called that the Herald boys since Sunday had been terrorising the area snatching phones, robbing and stealing motorcycles and they are youths from Oopo which their leader is named Dare Jalaruru.

"But because our members have shops in the axis, they warned the boys not to continue their nefarious act around their area so as not to stain the name and image of our group.

"But, to the one that now led to the crisis, they said, they went to steal some motorcycles and as they were moving them, one didn't work and so as not to allow the owners track the stolen bike, they set it on fire and they took the rest away.

"So, our boys kept watch and in the afternoon, the leader of the gang in Oopo came to pick the machine that was burnt. And our boys traced them to their base where they confronted them for stealing in the area. That was how the first round of the fight started in the afternoon (Thursday).

"Our boys after the fight had reported the matter at Mokola Police Station and they felt that since the matter had been reported to the police, everything had died down.

"But in the evening (Thursday) the gang attacked the house of one of our men named Olodo who built a house in Oopo, and the member had a narrow escape. But after he escaped he called our men to go and help him rescue his wife and children and that was how another round of fighting started.

"In the fight, we didn't know where and how the gangs got their guns, they shot heavily at our men and they took the opportunity to attack our men in their homes. They knew they won't be able to

face them collectively at the midnight after burning the house

“The gang attacked our boys and they shot three of our men namely Akin Aluko, Quadri Omitola and Opeyemi.

“They were rescued to the hospital, but by daybreak Friday, two of them had died. The third person is still in a coma. It is under probability. That is what the thugs in Oopo and Inalende did overnight.”

Confirming the incident via a text message, the Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Oyo State Command, Adewale Osifeso said: “The story is true. Investigations are ongoing to establish the number of casualties and circumstances that led to the incident.

“Meanwhile, additional operatives have been deployed to the scene to maintain law and order. You would be updated in due course, please.”

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