

Hausa community wades in as truck driver kills tricycle operator in A'Ibom

Udeme Utip | Uyo

TENSION has continued to envelop Uyo, the Akwa Ibom State capital, following the killing of a tricycle operator by a Hausa truck driver at the popular Itam International market after a heated argument over allegations of obstruction of the major access road into the market.

An eyewitness, Akan Basse, who was at the market, said trouble started when the truck driver, while trying to negotiate space to park for easy off-loading of rice meant for the Yuletide season, was obstructed by a tricycle operator and tables used by

traders to display their wares, forcing a gridlock.

Angered by the resolve not to clear the road, the driver reportedly emerged from his truck with a machete and with it, struck the tricycle operator on the head.

The tricycle operator later died of his wounds before getting to the hospital.

The eyewitness said the incident occurred at about 7:00p.m. and crisis erupted for about an hour before police operatives arrived to restore calm.

He said: "The truck driver was angry because of the refusal of the tricycle operator and business owners to clear

their wares from the road for the truck to be properly parked for the rice to be off-loaded.

"When he [driver] alighted from the truck to try and clear the road, he met stiff resistance, and he brought out his machete and in the process, hacked the tricycle operator on the head."

It was learnt the outrage that followed led to the looting of the rice and torching of the truck by hoodlums.

Meanwhile, the whereabouts of the driver remained unknown as of the time of filing this report.

The market has, however, been shut and taken over by operatives drafted from the

nearby Itam divisional police station.

However, worried by the anticipated reprisal, leader of the Hausa/Fulani community in the state, Alhaji Alhassan Sadauki, has sued for peace, just as he appealed to law enforcement agents to be proactive and diligent in containing the crisis from snowballing into a full-scale ethnic war.

Alhaji Sadauki, speaking during a meeting where he led a delegation of the Hausa/Fulani community leaders to the divisional police officer of Itam, said: "We are appealing for calm. We urge security operatives to be diligent in their investigations."