

Three killed, 20 injured in Lagos fracas

Kunle Adeyemi

THREE persons were killed and over 20 others sustained injuries in Lagos on Tuesday when suspected hired thugs clashed with some villagers.

The incident happened at about 7.30am when two commercial Volkswagen buses marked XN 266 MUS and XN 391 BDG, loaded with persons suspected to be hired thugs attempted to enter Akesan village.

The men, according to a source, were armed with different types of guns, cutlasses, axes, knives, assorted charms and other dangerous objects.

Our correspondent learnt that the thugs were hired to forcefully enter Akesan village and take possession of a piece of land allegedly owned by their benefactor.

The source said when the thugs got to a spot on the Igando-LASU road, they blocked the road and began to fire gunshots into the air to

announce their arrival in the area.

Another source informed our correspondent that the party that hired the thugs had obtained a court injunction over the disputed land.

He said, "I think they came to enforce the court order over a parcel of land in Akesan village, but the villagers stood up against them."

The situation, however, became rowdy when some villagers, who had apparently prepared for the invasion, repelled the entry of the thugs into their domain.

Commercial activities, especially transportation, were immediately brought to a halt as drivers frantically looked for an escape route from the temporary "war zone."

The shootings continued just as some of the actors in the mayhem were seen pursuing their targets with axes and cutlasses.

It was learnt that some persons who had already been hit by bullets, also received

machete cuts from their assailants.

A combined team of regular and riot policemen later appeared on the scene to quell the crisis.

It was learnt that the policemen had to fire several canisters of teargas into the rampaging bandits before many of them could flee.

After the police intervention, 12 suspects,

mostly wounded, were arrested and taken into police custody.

Spokesman for the Lagos State Police Command, Mr. Frank Mba, confirmed the crisis and deaths to our correspondent on Tuesday.

Mba, a deputy superintendent of police, said two pump action rifles and one locally-made pistol were recovered from the suspects.

Police arrest six over N50m deal

Francis Falola, Minna

THE Police in Minna, Niger State, have arrested an executive officer of the Niger state Board of Internal Revenue and five others over an alleged N50m deal.

Though the source of the money in question has not been known, our correspondent was told that it could be Niger State government money.

Investigations revealed that the executive officer contacted one Abubakar Muazu a teacher in one of the secondary

schools outside Minna town to help him find a company account into which money could be paid and later withdrawn at a given price.

According to the investigations, Muazu contacted his friends Anbubakar Abdullahi and Aliyu Bawa who were both officials of the Motor cycle Express Services and Development Association who agreed that the money be paid into the associations account in a Minna based new generation bank.

"There were other dangerous weapons seized from the thugs. These included 15 cutlasses, two axes, two knives and bags of charms," Mba said.

During interrogation, the suspects told the police that they were hired from Agege and Mushin areas of the state.

According to the PPRO, one of the suspects had said, "The people who came for us paid

some of us N500 while others received N1,000."

Mba said even if a party to a dispute got an injunction from a court, the enforcement of that injunction should not be by hired thugs.

He said the action was criminal and the police would treat it so, adding that efforts were on to arrest the masterminds of the mayhem.

It was learnt that both Abubakar Abdullahi and Aliyu Bawa, who were both chairman and treasure of the association, brought in the auditor of the organisation one Mohammed Jibrin, who was also a signatory to the account.

Our source also indicated that, on Monday the executive officer of the revenue board paid the sum of N50m in two Lagos-based bank.

The executive officer according to the findings, later informed his friend that the money had been lodged and

that they would be given 10 per cent of the amount immediately they withdrew the money and handed it over to him.

The official of the bank, it was learnt, from where the money was to be withdrawn, suspected the movement of the officials in the bank hall and informed the police leading to their arrest.

Those arrested named the executive officer as their principal and he was picked up from his desk on Tuesday along with another staff.