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Three feared dead as butchers clash in Lagos

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No fewer than three persons were feared dead on Friday as two factions of butchers in the Isolo area of Lagos State engaged in a bloody clash.

The clash, which was allegedly caused by a supremacy battle between two factions identified as Igbehin-Adun and Human Rights, started around 8a.m., after a detachment of policemen had earlier in the morning allegedly imposed the Human Rights faction on the other. Saturday Punch gathered that before the early morning 'coup,' the Igbehin Adun faction had held sway in the market.

Trouble, however, started after the policemen left around 7.30a.m. Saturday Punch gathered that the thinking was that since the butchers usually made their highest sales in the morning, the group at the receiving end would not do anything until later in the day or early hours of today (Saturday), when the policemen were expected to return.

A shop owner told our correspondent that while the policemen were at the market, there was relative calm, "but after they left, the Igbehin-Adun people decided to overthrow the Human Rights group."

The market was subsequently thrown into chaos as machetes, guns and other dangerous weapons were freely used by the two factions. The fracas later spread to other areas of the market, forcing other market men and women to close shops.

By the time some mobile policemen stormed the market to restore peace, about three people had reportedly died while many others suffered injuries. But the policemen were able to restore peace and skeletal trading then resumed.

When contacted, the spokesman of the state police command, Mr. Frank Mba, denied the involvement of policemen in the tussle. He said that only one person died while eight suspects had been arrested.

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