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Police, council boss differ over Ijebu Ife killings

By Olusola Fabiyi and Ademola Oni, Published: Tuesday, 8 Dec 2009

A A A A A

Controversy is surrounding last Saturday's killing of no fewer than 15 persons in Ijebu Ife after a fracas between youths and a vigilance group.

The violence also claimed an Assistant Commissioner of Police, Mr. Omololu Oladokun, who was burnt by unknown persons.

The police boss was said to have been killed as he tried to pacify angry youths in the town, who were protesting the killing of a partially deaf and dumb tailor, Toba Bayesan, by the town's security outfit.

Residents of the town had claimed that the burning of houses and the killing of civilians were done by the police to avenge the gruesome murder of Oladokun, who was until his death, the Area Commander of Ijebu.

Speaking with our correspondent on Monday, the Police Public Relations Officer, Ogun State Command, Mr. Olumuyiwa Adejobi, said the police were not responsible for the mayhem.

Adejobi, an Assistant Superintendent of Police, explained that the police found the corpses in the market and evacuated them to the necessary morgues.

"It was a riot situation. The police found those bodies in the town market; the killings were not the handiwork of the police. We only moved the bodies; we can't leave the bodies on the streets but to take them to the mortuary," he said.

Adejobi said the police had arrested about 30 suspects in connection with the violence.

Although an indigene of the town, who craved anonymity, said the miscreants that caused the destruction had fled the community before the arrests were made, the PPRO explained that the suspects would help the police in their investigations.

"We want to use one stone to kill two birds; to know the immediate cause of the riot and bring the culprits to book and ensure that such is averted in the community in future," he said.

The Chairman, Ijebu East Local Government, Mr. Tunde Oladunjoye, however, insisted that evidence at his disposal confirmed that the police were responsible for the killings.

He said, "On hearing of the crisis in Ijebu Ife, I put a call again to DPO Duro who was shouting on top of his voice that I should not come to Ijebu Ife; that the Area Commander had been killed by a 'mob' and the situation was very tense.

"I also heard the DPO shouting orders to his men, 'Oya oya (hurry, hurry) pack them, pack. So, I guessed some people had been arrested and were being moved into a vehicle for onward transfer to Igbaba."



Inspector-General of Police, Mr. Ogbonnaya Onovo



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Oladunjoye added that the riot policemen deployed in the town shot at houses in the area after Oladokun's murder.

He also warned members of the public to desist from attacking police officers.

He said the shooting started from the house of a retired military officer and head of the vigilance group, named Duduyemi.

"All the shops in the vicinity where the APC was stationed at Itawade were burnt down and many people, mainly men, were said to have been killed by the riot policemen," the council boss alleged.

Meanwhile, the Inspector-General of Police, Mr. Ogbonna Onovo, on Monday said those responsible for Oladokun's murder would be apprehended.

Onovo regretted that the late officer was abducted while pacifying some villagers.

The police boss, in a statement signed by the Force Public Relations Officer, Mr. Emmanuel Ojukwu, commiserated with the family of the late officer.

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