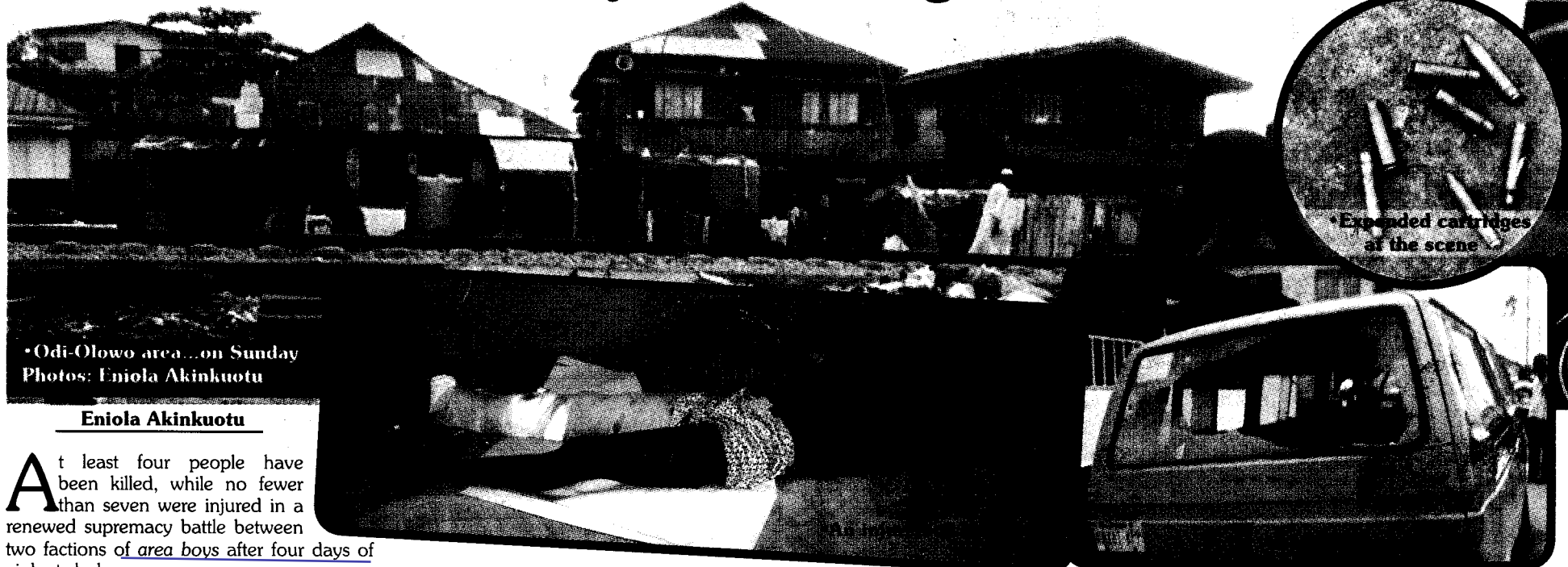


PUNCH METRO

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Four killed, seven injured in Lagos violence



• Odi-Olowo area... on Sunday
Photos: Eniola Akinkuotu

Eniola Akinkuotu

At least four people have been killed, while no fewer than seven were injured in a renewed supremacy battle between two factions of *area boys* after four days of violent clash.

PUNCH METRO gathered that the orgy of violence, which started on Thursday, climaxed on Saturday evening resulting in the death of the four men identified simply as Uche; Isiaka; Matthew and an unidentified man in Odi Olowo area of Mushin.

According to an elderly member of the community, who identified himself simply as Segun, the violence is being fomented by a man identified simply as Toba.

It was learnt that the same man also had a hand in the recurring crisis in Jibowu-Fadeyi area of the state.

PUNCH METRO learnt that following clashes in Fadeyi in May, policemen have been carrying out routine patrols in the area as well as Mushin and its environs, which brought about relative peace.

The relative peace led to the gradual withdrawal of policemen, an action which was protested by some of the residents.

Some of the residents of the area, who spoke with our correspondent on condition of anonymity, on Sunday, attributed the renewed violence to the gradual withdrawal of the policemen.

A doctor, who runs a clinic in the area, identified some of the injured victims in his clinic as Idris Animashaun, Ismaila Ogunmola and another unconscious man identified simply as Taofeeg.

He said since last week, he had been treating patients with bullet wounds.

"I have been treating patients all week. Just this morning, a man was brought to my clinic and was dead on arrival. I even had to reject some patients yesterday (Saturday) because my hands are full. I don't know why the government is doing nothing about this," the doctor, who craved anonymity, said.

Some youths in the area accused policemen from MOPOL 20 of backing the *area boys* who attacked their community on Saturday.

"When Toba's men came to attack us, we resisted them. To our dismay, Mopol 20 men began to take sides with them and even shot at us. I don't know why Nigeria is like this," one of them, who declined to give his name, said.

A senior police officer, who spoke to our correspondent, said the crisis, which started some years back, was now getting out of hand, adding that the police and the state government had made efforts to resolve the problem.

The officer, who did not want his name mentioned, said, "Some years ago, the then Commissioner of Police, Mr. Marvel Akpoyibo, along with the Area D Commander, Mr. Uwem

Akpan, had a meeting with the aggrieved parties and they reached a compromise. However, after Akpoyibo left, the problem resurfaced.

"Ever since, the area commander has invited them for more talks but Toba has refused to show up at the command."

The hot spots in Mushin, which the police have identified as Akala, Alhaji Lasisi, Aileru, Oyegunle streets as well as the Onipanu end of the railway line are notorious for drug trafficking.

A man, who identified himself simply as Ade, attributed the crisis to supremacy battle between two factions over which of

the groups would control the area and extort money from traders.

Confirming the incident, the Lagos State Police Public Relations Officer, Mr. Samuel Jinadu, said the situation was now under control, adding that investigations were still ongoing.

"The clash was between two factions of *area boys* over the issue of collecting money from traders in the area. The violence escalated around 3am on Saturday resulting in the death of two people before the arrival of the police. One corpse has been taken to Isolo General Hospital, while another has been buried," he said.

Our correspondent who visited the community reported that there were expended cartridges of bullets on some streets in the area, while some vehicles and shops had been vandalised.

Policemen were seen carrying out stop and search operations at roadblocks while many residents stood in front of their houses recalling what had happened earlier that day.

Meanwhile, a tank, which supplied water to the community had been destroyed by bullets thereby leaving residents of the area without water.

Edo motorcyclists protest killing of member by police

James Azania

There was pandemonium in Ibillo, Akoko-Edo Local Government Area, of Edo State, on Sunday, as commercial motorcyclists popularly called *okada* riders went on the rampage protesting the alleged killing of one of their members by a policeman.

An eyewitness told PUNCH METRO that a police sergeant, popularly known as "Yellow," shot the motorcyclist at a checkpoint over his refusal to part with N20.

The motorcyclists, who barricaded the Lagos-Abuja Expressway for several hours searching for policemen in uniform for reprisal, were said to have attacked the police station in Ibillo, set ablaze some vehicles on its premises and released detainees at the station.

An eyewitness said, "One of the policemen attached to Ibillo police divisional headquarters shot a motorcyclist to death at the checkpoint in Ekpesa Junction when he refused to pay the normal N20 to the men at the checkpoint."

"It was during an argument that the police sergeant, who is popularly called Yellow, pulled his trigger and killed the bike man who hailed from Imoga community. This resulted in violence between the policemen and bike men from the area."

Another eyewitness, Shola Iyogun, who gave another account said, "The clash erupted between the police and *okada* riders at the police station when the riders stormed the station to bail one of the motorcyclists that was arrested by the police."

"They demanded N2,000 for the release. The bike men complained that the police extort them often and three of their bikes were impounded. They reported to the union executives who in an attempt to secure

the release of the bikes at the police station got locked up by the policemen in Ibillo. The police dispersed them with tear gas but when they resisted, the police started shooting and the mob set one of their vehicles ablaze.

"One person was shot dead and three others severely injured. Those injured are presently responding to treatment and recuperating at a hospital in Ibillo."

The Public Relations Officer, Mr. Peter Ogboi, who confirmed the clash in a

Man in police net for robbing Bureau de change operators

Eniola Akinkuotu

The police in Lagos have apprehended a man, Mr. Princewill Eze, for allegedly robbing three Bureau de change operators of thousands of dollars while posing as a customer.

According to police reports, the suspect was said to have also robbed several people at gun point in Ajah area of the state with two men allegedly dressed in police uniforms who are still at large.

A source, who spoke to PUNCH METRO on condition of anonymity, said Eze had robbed a lady at the Bureau de change situated in a shopping complex at the Ajah area of the state of the sum of \$14,000 (N2.1m) before defrauding other victims.

Another victim, who was identified simply as Mohammed, was said to have been approached by Eze in a purported bid to buy \$130,000 (N20.2m). It was learnt that rather than paying for the amount in naira based on the agreed exchange rate, the suspect opted to pay with a bank draft.

Mohammed was said to have agreed but insisted that the draft must be authenticated

telephone interview with our correspondent, said, "no one was killed."

But a top police officer, who declined to have his name in print, told our correspondent that the policemen were only defending themselves.

"Nobody was shot. There was no gunshot. The policemen had a right to defend themselves, and some people were injured when they came to protest at the police station. One of them was arrested and they came here protesting."

at a branch of Afribank before handing over the dollars.

But before they got to the bank, Eze in company of the two yet-to-be identified suspects allegedly brought out a pistol and robbed Mohammed of his money before throwing him out of a moving car.

According to a police source, following a tip-off, a woman was arrested driving the car used for the operation and on interrogation, she said the car belonged to Eze.

When arrested, our correspondent gathered that Eze confessed to the crime.

It was learnt that about N1.7m was recovered from the suspect, while the Range Rover sports car used for the operations had been impounded.

The Lagos State Police Public Relations Officer, Mr. Samuel Jinadu, who confirmed the incident, said Eze's accomplices were not genuine policemen.

"It is true that the suspect has fleeced several money changers of their money under the guise of being a customer, but after several investigations, it was discovered that the two alleged policemen were actually fake," he said.