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## One killed as cultists hijack protest against killer cop

AUGUST 22, 2013 BY ENIOLA AKINKUOTU AND TOPE OMOGBOLAGUN 2 COMMENTS



**The protesters**

| credits: Segun Bakare

A resident of Ikorodu, Lagos State, lost his life on Wednesday after suspected cult members and policemen clashed in the area.

*PUNCH Metro* learnt that the violence broke out during a demonstration by commercial motorcycle riders (*okada* riders), who had taken to the streets to protest against the death of Lekan Ajayi, an *okada* rider who was killed by a policeman attached to the Rapid Response Squad on Tuesday.

One of our correspondents, who visited the area, observed that the incident resulted in a gridlock, leaving many commuters

stranded for hours.

The *okada* riders and Ajayi's family members started the protest at the Ojubode area of Ikorodu around 8am before they moved to the Sabo area.

*PUNCH Metro* had reported on Wednesday that a policeman identified only as Haruna, in company with three others, attempted to arrest Ajayi. He was later shot for resisting the arrest.

However, his colleagues said there was no struggle between Lekan and the policeman, adding that the reason for shooting was unknown.

Chairman, Okada Riders Association of Ladega, Mr Kayode Jimoh, said this was not the first time Haruna would kill one of their members.

He said, "RRS men usually come to that area to harass motorcycle operators, when in fact, the area is not a highway. No *okada* operator in Ikorodu rides on the highway anymore since the road traffic law was enacted.

"Haruna has always been oppressing us in Ikorodu. Whenever he comes to Ikorodu, he threatens us with his gun. He goes as far as entering into Ladega, Kokoro-abu and Sabo areas. These places are not restricted."

During the protest, an RRS patrol vehicle drove by. Some people threw stones, bottles and others at the policemen in the vehicle.

The policemen retaliated by firing tear gas canisters, causing a stampede. A yet-to-be identified man reportedly died in the stampede.

Jimoh, however, said those who were stoning the policemen were not *okada* riders but only took advantage of the protest.

"I have spoken to my members not to let the protest degenerate into crisis and they have been very supportive. Those who have been violent in the protest are not my members," he said.

Our correspondents later discovered that some youths, suspected to be cultists, were those that attacked the policemen. It could, however, not be established why they took the action.

When *PUNCH Metro* visited Ikorodu General Hospital, Lekan's family members were seen crying.



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It was learnt that the 36-year-old man had two wives and four children.

One of Lekan's widows, Alaba, said the murder of her husband was painful.

She said, "We discussed about school resumption in the morning (Tuesday) and he decided to start saving to pay the school fees of the children. It was later that people started asking me if I had not heard that my husband was dead.

"I quickly dialed his telephone number; his friend picked up the call and confirmed it. I never believed this could happen."

The widow, however, pleaded with the Lagos State Government to help in catering for the deceased's family.

The brother of the deceased, Tunde Ajayi, said the family wanted justice.

The Police Public Relations Officer of the state command, Ngozi Braide, said the killer policeman had been arrested.

Braide also confirmed that another person was killed, adding that the identity of the deceased was still unknown.

She said, "On Tuesday, around 3.30pm, policemen attached to RRS went to Ladega area to arrest an *okada* rider. *Okada* riders were said to have ganged up and beaten up one of the policemen. However, another policeman in the team opened fire and killed an *okada* rider in the process. The policeman who shot the rider has been arrested, while the injured cop has been hospitalised.

"On Wednesday, there was a protest over the issue and some hoodlums, led by one Azeez, seized the opportunity to loot and marched down to the Sagamu Road Police Division, where they attempted to set the station ablaze.

"Policemen opened fire to disperse the hoodlums, while Azeez was arrested with some charms on him. Policemen, however, discovered a corpse at Ikorodu Roundabout. No one knows how he was killed."

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