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## Hoodlums kill two, vandalise police post, 15 vehicles

JANUARY 21, 2014 BY ENIOLA AKINKUOTU 9 COMMENTS

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One of the vandalised vehicles at Iwaya Police Post

| credits: Eniola Akinkuotu

No fewer than 200 hoodlums sacked the Iwaya, Yaba, area of Lagos State on Saturday, leaving death and destruction in the wake of their visit.

Our correspondent, who visited the area on Monday, learnt that the hoodlums also stormed the Iwaya Police Post on Omotola Street, vandalised property and patrol vehicles and freed the suspects who were in detention.

It was learnt that two people, including a little boy, lost their lives in the fracas which lasted for over four hours.

PUNCH Metro learnt that trouble began after some street urchins, otherwise known as

area boys, held a carnival to celebrate the New Year.

It was said policemen went to the area to disperse the boys around 12am on Saturday, but they refused to leave.

It was learnt that the Divisional Police Officer, Sabo Police Division, Anthony Aruna, while trying to disperse the youths, was attacked by the hoodlums.

A resident, who identified himself simply as Saka, said, "I saw everything that happened from my room. The area boys were having fun when residents called the police command headquarters to report that the boys constituted nuisance.

"The DPO, who was in mufti, came with his men and told the area boys to leave, but the boys said they had paid the policemen at Sabo to allow them hold the carnival and refused to leave. Most of the area boys were drunk. Suddenly, one of them, Gbenga, aka Ishan, threw a bottle at the DPO's head and a fight broke out.

"The policemen started shooting into the air in order to disperse the area boys, but they were too many. Some of them, who also had guns, started shooting and were able to overwhelm the police.

"The policemen retreated and the area boys seized the opportunity to enter the police post. They damaged everything in the station and proceeded to the cell. They released all the suspects that were in detention."

Our correspondent learnt that the hoodlums later made for the home of the *Baale* of Iwaya, Chief Murtala Oloko, on Aderupoko Street. They broke the gate with machetes and stones.

The culprits pelted his house with stones and vandalised four vehicles in the compound. A man, who tried to stop them was hacked many times with a machete.

It was learnt that the hoodlums were, however, prevented from further vandalising the *baale*'s house by

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policemen who had come back in larger number.

The policemen from nearby stations, as well as the Rapid Response Squad, were said to have eventually dispersed the hoodlums.

The *baale* told our correspondent that the hoodlums attacked his home because he was against the carnival.

Oloko said, "Some streets in this area usually hold separate carnivals and it always ends in violence. On November 17, 2013, I held a meeting with the DPO and 11 youth leaders in the area and we decided that there would be no carnival.

"The 11 youth leaders signed an undertaking and the original copy is with the DPO. However, these guys went behind my back to bribe some policemen in the station. Around 7pm last Friday, I saw the youths setting up speakers for the carnival. A police patrol van even gave them security.

"So, when policemen came to disperse them about 12am, on the order of the police headquarters, the area boys felt they had paid and had a right to be there. That was what caused the fracas.

"After attacking the DPO, they vandalised the police post and later came to my house and vandalised everything they saw. Most of them wore masks."

Oloko urged the police authorities to wade into the situation in Iwaya. He said an Assistant Commissioner of Police was the one that usually helps the area boys secure bail anytime they were arrested.

A member of the Neighbourhood Watch, Abimbola Lawal, said he arrested one of the hoodlums, but was surprised to hear that the suspect had escaped from police custody.

"During the fracas, I grabbed one of the area boys and he was handed over to the police and handcuffed. A few minutes later, the policeman said the suspect, who was handcuffed, beat him up and escaped. The corpse of a little boy was seen Owodunni Street, it was recovered by the police," he said.

It was learnt that the following morning, policemen embarked on a raid and arrested many youths, many of whom have been transferred to the Special Anti-Robbery Squad.

When contacted on the telephone, Police Public Relations Officer, Ngozi Braide, who confirmed the disturbance in the area, said the police post was not vandalised.

She added, "The information we received was that the youths were staging a carnival and also fomenting trouble. On sighting the police, they launched an attack. A life was lost, not two. His remains have been deposited at the mortuary."

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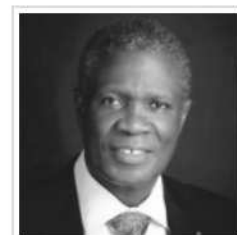
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