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One feared dead as groups clash

OCTOBER 10, 2014 BY ALEXANDER OKERE • 0 COMMENTS

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Some traders at the market

| credits: Alexander Okere

At least one person was feared dead on Thursday while two others were injured following a fierce battle between two rival groups in the Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State.

The two groups were in charge of issuing tickets at the Oba Market in the busy Lagos Street of the state.

Commercial activities were grounded as market women and other traders scampered for safety.

Some policemen and soldiers, who arrived at the scene as the fracas raged, fired tear gas canisters to disperse the warring groups and restore normalcy to the area.

PUNCH Metro gathered that trouble started when a disagreement ensued between the two groups over the number of people issuing tickets from each group to traders in the market.

It was learnt that one of the groups, identified as the Obaze, had approached the other group, known as the Osunla, to harmonise the number of those issuing tickets from the two groups and the areas of operation within the market.

But the Osunla group, which was said to have the most number of revenue collectors, rejected the initiative, leading to a heated argument.

An eyewitness told our correspondent that the argument escalated into a free-for-all, with members of the groups using weapons. A member of the Osunla allegedly shot at a member of the rival group.

A vehicle was also set on fire during the fierce battle.

The source, who pleaded anonymity, told our correspondent that the victim was rushed to an undisclosed hospital.

The source said, "The Osunla and Obaze families control Lagos Street market. They issue tickets to traders here for revenue collection.

"The Obaze group complained that they have only five people issuing ticket while the Osunla people have 18.

"So, they went to meet them (Osunla) to make everything equal. But the Osunla refused and they started fighting.

"Somebody from the Osunla group shot a member of the Obaze group and another person was seriously injured and rushed to the hospital."

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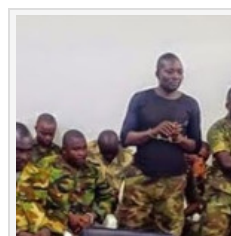


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The Edo State Commissioner of Police, Foluso Adebajo, who visited the scene of the incident, told our correspondent on the telephone that some arrests had been made.

He, however, did not disclose the number of people apprehended by the command.

"The clash was about revenue sharing. But arrests have been made. That's all," the CP said.

Efforts to reach the Chairman of the local government area, Mr. Osaro Obazee, to comment on the matter on Thursday, proved abortive.

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