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## Mayhem in Lagos •Four killed, 27 vehicles destroyed in gang war

FEBRUARY 26, 2015 BY SAMSON FOLARIN 140 COMMENTS

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**Scene of the violence**

| credits: Samson Folarin

Pandemonium broke out in the Mosafejo, Oshodi-Isale area of Lagos State, after rival groups said to be members of the National Union of Road Transport Workers, clashed on Tuesday evening and early Wednesday.

Four people were reportedly killed, while several others were injured in the fracas which was stopped after the intervention of security agencies.

PUNCH Metro gathered that no fewer than 15 commercial buses were set on fire, while 12 others were vandalised.

Makeshift stalls in the Mosafejo Motor Park were also torched, leaving traders in the park mourning their losses.

When PUNCH Metro visited the scene of the incident on Wednesday, the atmosphere was still tense as men of the Nigeria Police Force and some soldiers were observed patrolling the area.

The motor park, usually filled with vehicles, was deserted as the police armoured tanks and patrol vans took over the space.

Broken bottles, shards of glass from shattered windscreens and pebbles, said to have been deployed by some of the hoodlums during the fight, littered the road.

Bloodstains dotted the Oshodi Roundabout, where a man was said to have been shot dead and his corpse taken away by the police.

A vehicle was still burning as of 1pm when our correspondent passed the area.

Around the same time, a police van manned by police officers was observed by our correspondent taking some teenagers away.

A source told PUNCH Metro that the fight involved three groups — Big London boys, Railway boys and Under-bridge boys.

The source, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the fight started after the police ordered that there should be a stop in hemp smoking in the motor park.

The move was said to have been supported by the Big London boys, which brought them in conflict with the

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Railway and Under-bridge gangs who saw them as an ally of the police.

She said, "That was the beginning of the fight. The *Railway boys* and the *Under-bridge boys* usually conspire to wage war against the *Big London boys* which also had *Olu Omo* as a leading member.

"Yesterday (Tuesday), the allied gangs struck again and killed four people. One particularly was popular here and we call him *Afari*. A man was shot in the eye, another in the hand and leg. Several others are in critical conditions in hospitals."

Another witness, who did not identify herself, said one Idris was cut with machete in the buttocks, leg and hand.

"No one knows if he will survive the attack because his condition is critical," she said.

When *PUNCH Metro* crossed over to the area where the *Under-bridge* and *Railway* groups had their camp, he met some of the men who alleged that the fight was sponsored by the *Big London* gang.

"It was around 11pm on Tuesday that they came here. They were many in the *Big London* group. They had the police backing them and they want to drive us away from here. They descended on our vehicles and set many of them ablaze which you can see for yourself.

"They shot and injured three of our people, who have been rushed to hospital. We don't know why they are after us and this fight could have been bloodier, but we decided to be calm," a man in the group, who did not identify himself, said.



[/media-credit] Scene of the violence

Another member of the group, who equally declined identification, showed our correspondent an injury he sustained in his hand.

He said, "They shot at so many of us. This was where I was shot. Those guys were many. They shot at about 100 of us and burnt many buses."

Some of the traders, whose stalls were burnt, appealed for government's intervention.

Mrs. Taiwo Olajide, a mother of three and dealer in soft drinks, said she lost all her goods to the violence.

She said, "The hoodlums set fire on all the stalls in this park. They have ruined our business. This is where I feed my children and keep body and soul together."

Another trader, Mrs. Josephine Eze, said all her provisions were burnt.

Our correspondent also observed a cross-section of traders who were seated in front of their shops, which were not affected by the fracas.

They lamented that they had not been able to operate their business since the area was cordoned off by the police.

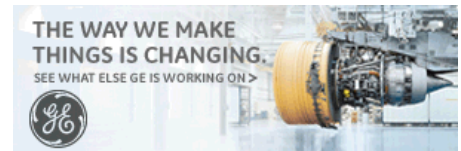
The Police Public Relations Officer, Kenneth Nwosu, while confirming the incident, said one person was killed, adding that the police recovered some weapons from the hoodlums.

He said, "There was an attempt to breach the peace at Oshodi. The hoodlums, who were rival members of the NURTW, engaged in a fight of supremacy over control of parks.

"In the process, about eight vehicles were burnt and 10 vandalised. One person was killed. Five cutlasses and four expended cartridges were recovered. Normalcy has been restored as adequate security has been made to avert any further breach of the peace."

Nwosu added that the police arrested nine suspects in connection with the crime.

Meanwhile, the Chairman of the Lagos State Council of the NURTW, Alhaji Tajudeen Agbede, has said the



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union will unravel the cause of incessant violent clashes in Oshodi.



Scene of the violence

He spoke on Wednesday while inaugurating a five-man committee to find out immediate and remote causes of the fracas in the area.

Agbede said the leadership of the union in the state would not fold its arms and watch some persons destroy the peace being enjoyed in the state.

He said, "We have been witnessing peace in Lagos State council of our union since my administration came in.

We have restored peace in all our parks, so we shall find out the cause of the present problems in Oshodi, with a view to finding a lasting solution to them."

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