

May 21st, 2015



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MAY 21, 2015 : JUDE OWUAMANAM, KAMARUDEEN OGUNDELE AND DANIEL GBABO 51 COMMENTS

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FOURTEEN people were killed in separate violence that rocked Ekiti, Plateau and Benue states on Tuesday night and Wednesday morning.

Three of the deaths were recorded in Ado Ekiti during a clash between transport workers and Hausa traders while six were in Plateau State where gunmen invaded four villages in the Barkin Ladi Local Government Area.

The third incident which was also by gunmen left five persons dead in Jooter, Ukum Local Government Area of Benue state.

The Ado Ekiti fracas was said to have started building up on Tuesday night when a bag belonging to the wife of a chieftain of the road transport workers was snatched by unknown persons along the ever-busy Ijigbo-Old Garage area of the city.

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The victim was also allegedly raped, a development that irked the drivers who, engaged the Hausa in a fre-for-all in Erekesan Market, Oja Oba in the state capital.

An eyewitness said the victim's husband reported the matter to his colleagues after his efforts to identify the perpetrators failed.

He added that butchers who, are mainly Yoruba, fought on the side of the Hausa against the transport workers

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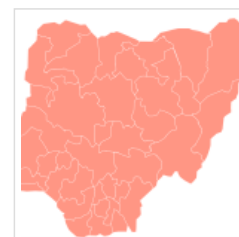
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whom they accused of undue harassment and unprovoked attacks.

"The fighting was made worse by hoodlums who joined the transport workers. They were fighting with guns, bottles, charms, clubs, cutlasses and knives. At least three people died. Some were also injured," he told one of our correspondents.

Our correspondent in the state reported that the violence spread from the market – Old Garage – Mugbagba axis of the city to Atikankan area, a converging point for many Hausa traders in the state.

As of the time of filing this report, Ajilosun, Okeyinmi, Okesha and Irona were no-go areas.

According to our correspondent, the hoodlums vandalised many vehicles and set many shops at the Erekesan Market ablaze after looting them.

Banks and other business outlets operating in the city were forced to shut down to avoid being looted by the hoodlums.

Sunday Adigun, a cameraman with the Core TV, who was beaten to a pulp, had his camera smashed for trying to cover the fighting which was hijacked by hoodlums.

The state Police Public Relations Officer, Alberto Adeyemi, did not confirm the deaths but he said that four persons wounded during the fracas were taken to an undisclosed hospital for treatment.

The state new Commissioner of Police, Etop James, who spoke with residents of the affected areas, expressed regrets over the incident and promised to restore normalcy in the city.

Our correspondent in Plateau State gathered that the attack on the four villages in Barkin LGA – Jong, Lobirin, Rabuk and Zim – was a reprisal by some armed youths for similar incidents in some Fulani communities.

Police Public Relations Officer, Emmanuel Abu, who confirmed the attack, said no arrest had been made.

Abu added that the Commissioner of Police, Nasiru Oki, had ordered the redeployment of more policemen in the LGA to prevent further attacks.

He urged the affected communities to remain calm and report any suspicious movement to the police.

The PUNCH gathered in Benue State that about 10 gunmen in a Toyota vehicle shot sporadically at people at a drinking spot in Jooter, Ukum LGA, killing five of them.

The gunmen were said to be looking for a target who was said to have gone to the place to have a drink.

An eyewitness who did not want his name in print said that the "target" was among the injured.

The state Command's Police Public Relations Officer, Austin Ezeani, who confirmed the incident, said that three people were killed and five critically injured.

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