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Traders flee Lagos market as gunmen kill two

MAY 22, 2015 : OLALEYE ALUKO

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Alarape market area

| credits: Olaleye Aluko

A large number of traders at the Alarape Market, Bajulaiye, in the Somolu area of Lagos fled their shops on Thursday when some gunmen, suspected to be cultists, invaded the area and unleashed mayhem.

PUNCH Metro learnt that two persons were killed during the violence which started at about 10am.

It was gathered that the first victim, Sulaiman Musbau, was hacked to death on Olatunde Street, while another man, identified only as Riliwan, was shot dead on Akinrinlo Road.

Officers from the Alade Police Division were said to have picked up 22-year-old

Musbau's corpse from the scene, while Riliwan, also known as Chaka, was reportedly taken away by his family.

Our correspondent learnt that the cause of the violence was the defection of some cult members to a political party, which did not go down well with rival cult groups.

When *PUNCH Metro* visited the market at about 1pm, most of the shops were locked, while a few traders sat in groups. Some residents also locked their doors.

Our correspondent observed three police patrol vehicles stationed in the market with policemen patrolling the area.

One of the traders, who gave his name simply as Austin, told *PUNCH Metro* that the gunmen came from the Akoka area.

He said, "When I arrived at the market, I met them in the middle of the violence. I saw some of the hoodlums. Some of them did not wear any shirt, while others wore shirts and jeans. There were gunshots on the Bajulaiye Road. Everyone inside the market locked up and ran for safety.

"I did not wait to see who they killed, but it looked as if they pursued some persons into the market. As a result of the tension, most traders have gone back home."

A resident, who spoke on condition of anonymity, urged the police to station a patrol van around the Bajulaiye canal, which he described as the base and hideout of the hoodlums.

He said, "I was about coming to the market to open my shop when my friends called me that cult groups in Somolu have resumed their violence.

"The solution to this problem is for the police to have a patrol at the canal area. That area has always been

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hoodlums' hideout."

Meanwhile, some miscreants, said to be loyal to a political party, attacked Pelewura and neighbouring streets on the Lagos Island on Tuesday.

A source said the hoodlums, who came at about 9.30pm, went about with kegs of petrol. They also reportedly shot, during which some people were said to have sustained injuries.

The Lagos State Police Public Relations Officer, DSP Kenneth Nwosu, confirmed the tension in Bajulaiye. He said the police had commenced operations to restore normalcy.

He said, "The skirmish started on Thursday because some members of a cult group defected to a rival group. One person was killed while our men have taken over the area.

"Operations geared towards restoring normalcy are underway. The area is calm now, and residents are urged to go about their business without molestation."

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Rivers State Governor, Mr. Rotimi Amaechi, accusing Governor-elect, Chief Nyesom Wike, of being responsible for the deaths recorded in the state during the 2015 general elections.



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