

Residents desert Lagos community after violence claimed two lives

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White Sand community

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Some residents living in White Sand community in the Ijora Badia area of Lagos State have abandoned their houses after a clash between hoodlums led to the death of two persons.

PUNCH Metro learnt that the clash, which started on Monday and continued till Wednesday, was between hoodlums from both Hausa and Yoruba dwellers in the area.

The deceased were identified as Ahmed Tijani and Ojo.

The hoodlums from both tribes were said to have clashed during a demolition being carried out in the area by the National Emergency Management Agency.

Our correspondent learnt that on Tuesday, the Hausa community claimed that NEMA officials were demolishing houses belonging to them only, and some Hausa hoodlums tried to stop the officials from continuing with the exercise.

Some officers of the Nigeria Customs Service were said to have come to the aid of the NEMA officials, during which they allegedly shot sporadically to disperse the hoodlums.

Three persons were said to have been hit by bullets, including Tijani, who later died.

The Yoruba community was said to have been aggrieved by the customs officers' actions and consequently, some hoodlums chased and injured one of the customs officers.

PUNCH Metro learnt that policemen from the Ijora Badia division came to the scene and the residents handed over the customs officer allegedly responsible for the shooting to the police.

Violence was said to have erupted shortly afterwards between the hoodlums from both Hausa and Yoruba groups.

Our correspondent learnt on Wednesday that some residents had fled the area.

A resident, who gave his name only as Akinsile, said two persons died and three other persons were injured by the bullets.

He said, "There had been tension between the Hausa and Yorubas, which became an issue on Tuesday when NEMA officials came to demolish unapproved structures. Some Hausa hoodlums resisted them and they stabbed a boy, Ojo, to death in the process.

"Some Yoruba hoodlums also attacked the Hausa community in retaliation and it became an ethnic clash. On Wednesday, all the Hausa started fleeing the community. The Seriki Hausa is nowhere to be found. The customs officer, who shot at Tijani, was caught by angry residents and handed over to the police."

Another resident, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said, "Four persons were injured. Two persons died. After the shootings, the customs men wanted to run, but the Yoruba people chased them and one customs officer was shot. He was rushed to a hospital."

Our correspondent learnt that policemen from the Area B Command, Apapa, patrolled the area on Wednesday to prevent further breakdown of law and order.

Efforts to get the Seriki of the Hausa community on Wednesday were unsuccessful.

The Public Relations Officer, NCS, Federal Operations Unit, Ikeja, Uche Ejiesime, said the customs officers were on routine patrol when the hoodlums mounted a roadblock and attacked the operatives.

He said, "Our operatives were on routine patrol and they ran into a roadblock mounted by some hoodlums. Our men also saw that some NEMA officials were carrying out a demolition in the area, but they were being attacked by hoodlums. So, NEMA officials called on our men to rescue them.

"Customs men cannot shoot sporadically. We have rules of engagement. We have subjected this matter to a thorough investigation. One of our men was injured by the hoodlums during the rampage."

The Lagos State Police Public Relations Officer, SP Dolapo Badmos, said the police did not arrest any customs officer, adding that normalcy had been restored to the area.

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