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One killed, 10 buses vandalised as clash in Lagos • Injured policeman in emergency

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ONE person was shot dead and many injured in Lagos on Wednesday as commercial drivers and policemen attached to the Lagos State Task Force on

Environmental and Special Offences (Enforcement) Unit clashed in the Mile 12 area.

When our correspondents visited the area, it was observed that about 10 vehicles were vandalised with broken pieces of glass scattered all over the area.

PUNCH Metro gathered that the clash, which began around 10am, was as a result of the resistance by some drivers to arrest by the task force personnel.

An eyewitness, Ms Bejide Lawal, said the people who were involved in the incident were drivers, noting that the police wanted to arrest them but they resisted.

Lawal explained that when the police were unable to arrest the drivers as they began pelting the personnel with missiles, the police started firing live bullets and tear gas canisters at the crowd.

She stated that the police were eventually able to arrest some of the drivers.

Lawal said, "The police fought with the drivers this morning. They wanted to arrest the drivers but the drivers did prevented the police personnel. But as the police insisted on arresting them, the drivers began to hurl stones at them."

"It was then that the police personnel started firing shots in the air and at the crowd. They also fired tear gas canisters at the people. Apart from this, they arrested some drivers."

One of the drivers, identified simply as Mutiu, whose bus was vandalised, said the attack was a reprisal by the task force

personnel.

Mutiu noted that on Tuesday, the task force personnel were prevented from making arrests by soldiers around the area.

He alleged that the soldiers failed to intervene when the officers returned on Wednesday.

He stated, "On Tuesday, when the task force officers came to Mile 12 to arrest buses on the service lane, the soldiers on duty prevented them, because it was an illegal operation."

"When they came today (Wednesday), they started impounding all the vehicles that were on the service lane. One of the drivers resisted arrest and he was attacked with a machete. That was when the drivers mobilised to confront them. The officers fired tear gas canisters but the drivers were undeterred by that."

"They chased the task force officers and in reprisal, the officers chased the drivers back to the Mandela Garage and they started vandalising buses and shooting indiscriminately. It was in the process that one of the conductors, Tunde Oja, was hit by a stray bullet."

Another motorist, simply identified as Dairo, said the vehicles vandalised were undergoing repairs, lamenting

that the task force personnel were frustrating his and others' source of livelihood.

He said, "These vandalised vehicles were parked for repairs and were not on the road, yet they still deemed it fit to come and vandalise them. Some of the vehicles had been parked here for months, because we don't have money to repair them yet."

"We are trying to make a honest living, yet the government is frustrating our efforts."

A commuter, Mrs Serifat

Tijani, said passengers had to alight from the buses they boarded in order to take cover while the shooting lasted.

However, the Chairman of the task force, CSP Olayinka Egbeyemi, said the enforcement operations around Mile 12 were carried out to rid the area of cultists and miscreants disturbing innocent members of the public.

In a statement issued by the spokesperson of the agency, Adebayo Taofiq, he said the task force arrested seven notorious miscreants and a

Residents panic as refuse takes over Akure



• Refuse on an Akure road

Peter Dada, Akure

RESIDENTS of Akure, the Ondo State capital, have called on Governor Rotimi Akeredolu to look into the problem of refuse being dumped on the streets.

It was observed that streets such as Oja Oba, Oba Adesida Road, Oyemekun Road, Arakale and Ondo Road, among others, were littered with heaps of refuse as the collectors had refused to work for the past four days.

The residents, who expressing apprehension over the development, appealed to the government to act urgently on the matter, saying there could be an outbreak of epidemic in the town if the government failed to resolve the problem.

A resident, Mrs Ajoke Raheem, called on the state government to act as the unpacked refuse was defacing the state capital, while the putrid odour was making her and other residents uncomfortable.



• The injured policeman

drivers, policemen ward at LASUTH – Task force

cult leader for attacking its personnel.

Egbeyemi added that the agency acted on 'Save our Soul' petitions submitted to its office by the residents of Mile 12 and its environs.

He said, "During the attack, an officer of the agency, Sergeant Damilola Adejo, was seriously injured with cutlasses and broken bottles, and he is presently receiving treatment and undergoing series of tests at the Lagos State University Teaching Hospital, Ikeja."

The chairman, however,

said that the Lagos State Commissioner of Police, Zubairu Mu'azu, had directed that all those arrested be charged to court.

"One of the arrested miscreants, Mr Ojo Opeyemi, claimed that they were given cutlasses and broken bottles by their group leaders at the Akanimodo area to attack the task force personnel," he added.

The state Police Public Relations Officer, DSP Bala Elkana, confirmed that one person was killed in the clash.

He added that investigation

was ongoing to determine what led to the death.

Elkana stated, "The hoodlums came with all manners of weapons to attack the officers when they went to carry out their duties. A sergeant from the task force was injured and is now in the Intensive Care Unit receiving treatment.

"They (task force personnel) had to fire tear gas canisters to disperse the hoodlums, which resulted in the death of one person. The CP has ordered an investigation into the matter."



• Some of the vandalised buses

Photo: Oluwatobi Akindele

shoots teenager dead in