

One killed as mob sets Oyo police station ablaze

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•Olukolu

Ademola Babalola, Ibadan

Following the rumoured death of a motorcyclist, Sule Ikuforiji, who was said to have been mistakenly shot by a sergeant at Iwo Road, Ibadan, on Saturday, an irate mob descended on police facilities and burnt down the Alakia-Adelubi Police Division and destroyed six vehicles in the process.

The Oyo State Commissioner of Police, Shina Olukolu, in a statement he personally signed on Sunday and titled: ‘The unfortunate shooting incident in Ibadan involving the police: Facts against fiction’, condemned the mob action and regretted the shooting of another man by the police in the ensuing melee.

Olukolu said a six-man police patrol team from the Alakia-Adelubi Division, led by an inspector, sighted a motorcyclist with four passengers and flagged them down for routine stop and search, adding that the men refused to stop and proceeded to run away.

He stated, “Due to the positioning of the men, the armed sentry, Sergeant Sunday Ogunkanmi, who was the last man on the professional positioning, made efforts to stop the motorcyclist and his passengers and consequently, there was a scuffle and they all fell down.

“While the others took to their heels, the apparently already cocked weapon was fired and hit the motorcyclist on the left elbow and grazed his ribs hence, he was hospitalised.

“The concerned mischief makers, who heard the gunshot, concluded that the man was dead and circulated the untrue story. A spontaneous uninformed angry mob immediately descended on the police team, damaged the windscreen of their patrol vehicle and injured two officers.

“Thereafter, the mob proceeded to the Egbeda Division but was repelled though three vehicles had their windscreens damaged. The mob, not done yet, proceeded to the Alakia-Adelubi Division with a view to burning it down.

“At the scene, all entreaties for understanding and peace were rejected by the multitude. The mob proceeded to attack the officers and men protecting the station with all manners of dangerous weapons, and damaged three other vehicles’ windscreens, part of the police station, particularly the sliding glasses, and vandalised some of the offices and the charge room.

“In the ensuing melee, one of the mobs with 25 litres of petrol began to wet the police station building with petrol and set ablaze part of it. In the process, he was unfortunately hit and lost his life on the way to the hospital, while others escaped and normalcy was restored.”

While stressing that the sergeant concerned was in custody and the matter was being investigated, Olukolu regretted the unfortunate incident that led to the fiasco.

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He said contrary to reports that the motorcyclist, Ikuforiji, was dead, he was recuperating at the University College Hospital, Ibadan.

The police boss urged the people to refrain from taking laws into their hands, while assuring members of the public of adequate safety of lives and property.

