

Four feared dead as drivers, police clash

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File image: Police

Sola Shittu, Benin

Four persons were feared dead on Thursday following a clash between security agents and protesters, mostly tipper drivers, over the death of a man identified as Frederick, aka *Original*.

The victim was allegedly killed by a police escort.

The protest, which started in the morning, escalated later in the day when the protesters were joined by residents of Azagba community, who reportedly set bonfires on the Benin-Auchi road.

The protesters were said to have destroyed vehicles that tried to drive through their barricade.

Witnesses said the deaths were caused by security agents sent to quell the riot.

In the melee, a van conveying officials of the Nigerian Correctional Service was attacked and personnel of the service were reportedly beaten and their rifles taken away.

A correctional service official, who was said to have managed to run into the bush with injuries, was rescued by some residents and taken to a private hospital.

A spokesman for the Nigerian Correctional Service, Aminu Suleiman, who confirmed the attack, denied that inmates were in the vehicle that was attacked by the rioters.

He said, “The details are still sketchy; we are still investigating. But what I can confirm is that our men, who were going outside the city for an official engagement, were attacked at Eyaen.”

The Edo State police spokesman, Chidi Nwabuzor, said the policeman that fired the shot that killed Frederick was an inspector from the Department of Operations, Delta State Police Command.

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Nwabuzor noted that the cop was attached to a construction firm and was on escort duty.

He said the inspector had a misunderstanding with the victim and shot him.

The spokesman explained that Frederick died while being rushed to the University of Benin Teaching Hospital.

“That was what led to the riot and all the criminal activities. The rifle of a correctional service officer was snatched. Investigation is on and we will make our findings public,” he added.

He said the police had no record of death during the protest.