

Police kill three during clash with Lagos tricycle riders over N100

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Scene of the incident

There was pandemonium on Command Road, Meiran, Lagos State, as a clash between men of the state police command and tricycle operators in the area left no fewer than three persons dead.

PUNCH Metro gathered that trouble started when a yet-to-be-identified traffic warden allegedly stabbed a tricycle operator, identified only as Eleyele, to death for refusing his demand for N100.

Angered by the development, the victim's colleagues ran after the policeman, who fled the scene.

After the cop escaped, the protesting crowd carried the victim's remains to the front of the Meiran Police Division, where it was deposited.

The tricycle operators were said to be protesting the death when they attacked the police station with bottles and stones.

The mob reportedly attempted to set the police station ablaze, but the policemen allegedly dispersed them with bullets and tear gas canisters.

A resident, who gave his name only as Yusuf, said the traffic policeman stabbed the victim in the chest, adding that the attack was unprovoked.

He said, "The incident happened around 9am. The tricyclist was going to a destination when the traffic policeman stopped him and demanded N100. He told the policeman that he just started work and did not have the money. We don't know if they had an argument, but the policeman suddenly brought out a knife and stabbed the operator in the chest. The man died on the spot.

“Immediately, we attempted to apprehend the policeman, but it was the same knife he used in attacking us till he escaped.

“So, we carried the victim’s corpse to the police station, but the policemen fired bullets and tear gas at us.

“Two months ago, a tricycle operator was killed, but we will not accept this one. The police have arrested a lot of us protesting Eleyele’s death. They put some of the arrested victims in a Black Maria and patrol vehicles. The tricycle leader in our area, known as Istijaba, intervened and told us to settle the matter and we agreed. But the police suddenly opened fire on us again.”

Another eyewitness, who identified himself only as Segun, said a roadside vulcaniser was hit by a stray bullet.

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He said, “The vulcaniser should be about 17 years old; it was when the policemen were trying to disperse us that he was killed by a stray bullet. The bullet hit him in the back and all his intestines came out of his stomach.

“The boy’s mother is blind, and two months ago, she lost one of her children. Now, her son is dead again. We also took his corpse to the Meiran Police Station, but the police kept firing tear gas and live bullets at us and other victims suffered bullet wounds. In all, three people were killed and some others are in hospitals getting treatment.”

PUNCH Metro observed as the police fired tear gas at the mob, who were armed with bottles and stones.

The mob, while protesting the circumstances surrounding the deaths of the victims, paralysed business activities in the area.

Motorists, motorcyclists and tricyclists were prevented from operating in the area.

Bonfires were also set on the Command Road, as broken bottles littered some sections of the expressway.

Residents and business owners in the area were seen running helter-skelter to escape being caught in the unrest that enveloped the community.

The state Police Public Relations Officer, CSP Adekunle Ajisebutu, said, “The Commissioner of Police, Hakeem Odumosu, has dispatched adequate police patrol teams to maintain law and order there. No cause for alarm.”