

Alaba market traders, hoodlums clash, one feared killed

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ONE person was feared killed and several others injured on Wednesday when traders clashed with some tax collectors, aka agberos, at the Alaba International Market, in the Ojo Local Government Area of Lagos State.

The warring factions, who were in their hundreds, deployed different weapons, including stones, cutlasses, woods and axes, during the affray.

A video clip seen by our correspondent on social media and confirmed to be from the clash, showed the two groups hurling cudgels at one another.

PUNCH Metro also obtained photos showing some people who sustained varying degrees of injury.

Our correspondent gathered that the fight was due to the increasing charges in the market by the agberos.

Some of the traders were said to have set a bonfire on the road as they walked around the market chanting, 'Eyimba Eyim.'

A trader, who identified himself simply as Ifeanyi for security reasons, said his colleagues were ready to starve if it would end the extortion.

"They are always increasing the money they charge us. They overcharge us when trucks want to load and offload our goods. Dispatch riders are also overcharged, thereby reducing the amount we gain as they increase the cost of



• Scene of the incident

their services which we make use of when people order our

goods online," he added.

Another trader, Augustine

Ikenna, said the protesters were permitted by the chairman of the market association to demonstrate after a meeting on Wednesday.

A resident, who asked to be identified simply as Nkechi, feared for the safety of those in the neighbourhood.

She said, "We are not safe. I saw the rioters brandishing axes and swords; I even heard gunshots. I hope this won't lead to a situation where they will start going from house to house at night to rob people."

Efforts to reach the chairman of the market association proved abortive.

The state Police Public Relations Officer, SP Benjamin Hundeyin, confirmed the incident, adding that normalcy had been restored.

The police spokesperson was, however, silent on the number of casualties.