

One killed as NURTW factions clash in Abuja

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Tajudeen Baruwa

By Abiodun Sanusi

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One person has been reportedly killed and several others injured in a violent clash between factional groups of the National Union of Road Transport Workers in the Sapele Crescent, off Ladoke Akintola Boulevard, Garki II, the Federal Capital Territory, on Tuesday.

Our correspondent further learnt that the FCT Police Command had arrested about 23 male suspects and recovered three rifles during the violent clash between the two factions.

The conflict, which is suspected to emanate from an ongoing leadership tussle within the union, broke out when suspected supporters of the factional president, Tajudeen Baruwa, attempted to enter the NURTW's headquarters, currently being occupied by the Lagos Park Management Committee led by the former NURTW Vice President, Tajudeen Agbede.

Speaking on the clash with *PUNCH Metro* on Tuesday, the FCT Commissioner of Police, Haruna Garba, confirmed the death of one of the rioters.

Garba, who said the police had restored peace to the area following the arrest of 23 suspects, added that no fewer than three rifles were recovered.

"Twenty-three people have so far been arrested, and the death toll is only one: a yet-to-be-identified male. And three rifles were also recovered," CP Garba said.

Meanwhile, sources privy to the internal wrangling claimed that two people in Baruwa's faction of the union were killed and several others had been hospitalised following Tuesday's clash.

The source said, "Two people died from Baruwa's camp today (Tuesday) during the clash at the NURTW headquarters."

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Another source, who did not want to be mentioned for fear of victimisation, also claimed that two people were allegedly killed during the clash.

The source said, “Yes, two of Baruwa’s boys were killed during the clash because police blocked them from gaining access into the office to face Agbede’s boys. The police provided cover for Agbede’s group,” a second source revealed.

Recall that Baruwa had earlier revealed that he sought the intervention of the Nigeria Police Force and the Nigeria Labour Congress to intervene in the wrangling within the union without success.

“We shall henceforth not hesitate to defend our mandate with the last drop of our blood,” Baruwa had earlier vowed while accusing former NURTW leaders of illegally occupying the National Secretariat of the union.

He had vowed and stressed that only a court of competent jurisdiction could invalidate his mandate while encouraging aggrieved members to follow due process for redress.

He further accused the former president of the union, Najeem Yasin, and ex-VP Agbede of holding illegal meetings with selected past leaders of the union.

Our correspondent could not reach both factions on Tuesday as the telephone lines of Baruwa and Agbede were unavailable.