

Mob Burns Down Ijebu-Ode LG Secretariat • After Killing Of *Okada* Rider

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Mayhem broke out in Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State this morning as commercial motorcyclists popularly called *Okada* took to the streets, destroying vehicles and burning a section of the Ijebu-Ode local government secretariat, to protest the killing of one of their members by the town's vigilance guards.

As early as 7 a.m. when news of the death of the motorcyclist became public, the *Okada* operators barricaded major roads in the town and attacked vehicles and tricycles on the road.

As at the time of filing this report, over 20 tricycles had been destroyed by the protesting *Okada* operators, including new ones parked at the council's secretariat.

P.M. News gathered that trou-

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Ijebu-Ode

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ble started when the deceased *Okada* operator was accosted by a member of the local government's task force popularly called Obanta Safe And Secure Central Vigilante, for operating outside the restricted hours.

The *Okadaman*, identified as Saheed Bamilogbon, was said to have tried to escape and in the process knocked down a vigilance guard, Seyi, also popularly called Smart.

P.M. News learnt that both of them sustained injuries and were rushed to the Ijebu-Ode General Hospital. The *Okadaman*, however, died while the guard is said to be in critical condition.

Chairman of the task force, Major Iyowun (retd.) confirmed the incident, explaining that the deceased violated the restriction order for *Okada* operators fixed for 7 p.m. and 7 a.m.

"As you know, it is against the law in Ijebu-Ode for *Okada* riders to operate between 7 p.m. and 7 a.m. within the town. The *Okada* rider was ordered to stop around 6.35 a.m. today in front of the local government secretariat, Itoro, Ijebu-Ode by one of my men called Seyi, a.k.a. Smart, but he refused to stop and he forcefully hit the man. They both fell and were rushed to the hospital where he (*Okada* rider) finally died. Smart is still in the hospital.

"To my surprise, *Okada* rid-

ers in their hundreds, took to the streets and started destroying many things, including our vehicles. They destroyed over 20 three-wheelers, burnt down the local government secretariat and wounded a lot of my boys. It is only God that saved me this morning, I would have been lynched by the boys," added the retired major.

When contacted on phone, the Chairman of Ijebu-Ode Local Government Council, Giwa Mufutau Oseni said: "The matter has been reported to me and I have been to the hospital to see the corpse of the *Okadaman* before it was carried away by his colleagues, and taken all over the town. I also saw Seyi in the hospital.

"The extent of their destruction is too much. Reports reaching me confirmed that many vehicles have been destroyed. I heard they wanted to burn down one filling station at Olisa Street (Okubadejo filling station) and that it was the intervention of the councillor in the area that saved the station.

"I am appealing to them to sheathe their swords. What happened has happened and nothing can bring back the life of the young man. I pray that Allah would give his family the fortitude to bear the irreparable loss," Oseni said.

As at the time of filing this story, a detachment of policemen from Igbeba Police Station, led by the Area Commander, has been drafted to the town to quell the riot.