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2 feared dead as post-election violence erupts in Lagos

28th February 2019 in Cover, Elections

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Two persons were feared killed while many others, including policemen were injured yesterday when street urchins went on rampage in some parts of Lagos, attacking traders and other road users in the process.

The crisis erupted in the Alaba-Rago area of Ojo and on Lagos Island.

The Alaba-Rago crisis started at about 8.30am when some street urchins blocked the Mile 2-Badagry expressway to celebrate the victory of President Muhammadu Buhari, but the celebration turned bloody when some of the hoodlums started manhandling road users and traders.

A witness, Jude Maduagwu, said that some youths, who were in large numbers were celebrating Buhari's victory in last Saturday's presidential election when violence broke out.

Maduagwu said the youth, most of whom were commercial motorcycle operators (okada riders), blocked the Mile 2-Badagry expressway and started manhandling passersby.

Tajudeen Muyideen, a commercial bus driver, said that he made a detour when he sighted the blockage and bonfire on the road made by the hoodlums. He noted that the hoodlums who were armed with cutlasses, clubs, daggers and other weapons and were beating and robbing motorists and other road users.

Chiamaka Udemadu, a trader at the Alaba International Market, said that the news of the fracas forced traders to close shop: "Two persons allegedly died while several others, including a policeman, sustained injuries. The hoodlums, after committing the dastardly act, started marching from Alaba to Okokomaiko, singing songs of victory in celebration of the President's victory."

The trader said that the youths were chanting "Sai baba, sai baba," and, when they got to Okokomaiko, they resumed destroying traders' wares, which caused many of the traders to run for safety, leaving their wares behind.

"They marched to the police division and when policemen on guard tried to stop them they attacked them. I heard gunshots and I was later told that a policeman was killed by the hoodlums. I also heard that it was the army that helped to restore peace in the area.

"You know that ndigbo own virtually all the shops in the area; that was why people were saying that Hausa people were attacking the igbo. It is not that the people deliberately attacked ndigbo, not really, it was the issue of misplaced priority by those celebrating who started making trouble," said another witness.

When Daily Sun visited Ojo, policemen attached to the Rapid Response Squad (RRS), the Nigerian Army, Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) and several police patrol teams were on ground. Shops at the Alaba Rago Market were still closed, a few roadside traders, however, had started displaying their goods.

Meanwhile, on Lagos Island, hundreds of miscreants, popularly known as area boys, went on rampage again, warning traders not to open their shops and forcing those who had already opened for business to close shops.

The area boys were alleged to have accused the traders of not voting for a particular candidate and political party. The miscreants, armed with weapons such as cutlasses, broken bottles, wood and knives, struck at about 9am in areas like Oluwole, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Tinubu, Bamgbose and Alli streets.

A victim, Ogechi Obodozue, told Daily Sun: “Some of us were beaten with specific instructions that we must close shop and that the shops must remain locked as punishment for not voting for a particular party. The threat made us traders to quickly close our shops and we are standing far away to witness what is going to happen to the shops. I think the people want to intimidate us and put fear in us so that we will not be bold to come out to vote in the upcoming governorship election. We need heavy police protection in the markets, churches and during the governorship election.”

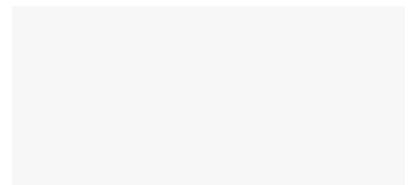
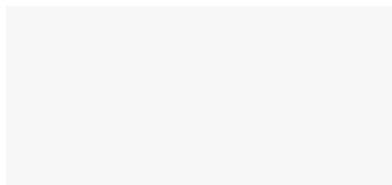
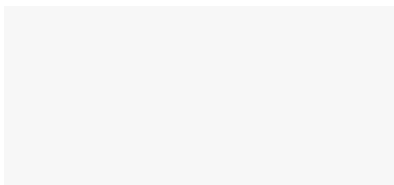
However, the coming of policemen to the areas on the order of the Area ‘A’ Commander, Bode Ojajuni, saved the crisis from escalating.

Lagos State police spokesman, CSP Chike Oti, who confirmed the Alaba Rago incident, said that upon the receipt of the information policemen were deployed to the scene on the orders of the Lagos State Commissioner of Police, Muazu Zubairu.



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