

Taiwo Jimoh

A 32-year-old member of the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW), Ojodu Berger branch, Lagos State, identified simply as Rasheed, was stabbed to death during a party which turned bloody on Tuesday night.

Witnesses said that Rasheed was outside an event centre at River Valley Estate, Ogun State, receiving a call, when some armed men rushed to him and attempted to snatch his phone.

When he started struggling with them, one of them whipped out a dagger and stabbed him in the neck.

When Rasheed's friends found him in a pool of blood, they tried to rush him to the nearest hospital, but he died on the way.

Rasheed's death led to pandemonium with members of NURTW chanting war songs, demanding retribution. It was also alleged that some hoodlums used the opportunity to start stealing from traders. They mayhem was said to have started about 10p.m. during NURTW's get together party tagged: "First Lagos."

Mr. Kunle Idowu, a member of NURTW, said: "We were inside the event centre, when we heard the noise of people fighting outside. Some of us rushed out of the venue to see what was happening. We saw Rasheed in a pool of blood. Immediately, some of his friends tried to rush him to a private hospital. He, however, died on the way to the hospital."

When the men realised Rasheed was dead, they turned back. They were arrested by policemen from Ojodu Abiodun Police Station, who demanded to know how they came to be in possession of a body.

One killed as NURTW party turns bloody

"We stayed back at the venue, dousing tension and pacifying some of his friends, who wanted to make trouble," Idowu added.

Another member of NURTW, who refused to disclose his name, said: "We're a social group in NURTW. This is not the first time we would be gathering to dance and wine. Those who caused the crisis were hoodlums we prevented from entering the venue of the party. We knew some of them would want to attend the party."

"There was a serious commotion when news of Rasheed's death broke out. Some traders on the roadside scammed for safety as some of the hoodlums used the opportunity to loot their wares."

Mrs. Dupe Adelaja, a trader, alleged that some of the policemen stationed at Ojodu Berger under bridge were not doing enough.

She said: "On Tuesday morning before the party started, some members of NURTW were smoking Indian hemp freely in public without being challenged by the security agents. Some of us, who were still outside selling on the roadside when the incident started, lost some of our goods. The hoodlums went on the rampage, protesting the murder of their friend. They also attacked passers-by."

"I beg the Lagos State government and the police to pay more attention to Ojodu Berger under



The banner. Inset: Adeosun, chairman NURTW

bridge and the Lagos State Public Works Corporation office as some of the hoodlums are always there, smoking freely."

One of the executives of NURTW, who didn't want his name mentioned, said: "We warned everyone not to foment trouble at the party. Before the party was organised, they

had been warned by the state Chairman of the union, Alhaji Akeem Adeosun, from Abeokuta. The death of the victim was an unfortunately incident."

The state Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), SP Abimbola Oyeyemi, confirmed the incident. He said that four suspects were arrested in connection with Rasheed's death.

He said: "The suspects were arrested with the corpse in a pool of his blood. The Commissioner of Police, Ahmed Iliyasu, however, ordered that the suspects be transferred to the Homicide Section of the command, Elew-eran, Abeokuta, Ogun State, for further investigation."