

Soldiers, Unions' Clash Claims 5 in Osun

No fewer than five persons have been reportedly killed in a renewed clash between soldiers and taxi drivers and commercial motorcycle riders in Ilesa, Osun state. Several others were said to have sustained various degrees of injuries in the crisis which erupted this morning.

It was learnt that the trouble was due to a violent protest by commercial drivers and motorcycle operators against extortion by the security men in the town. The taxi drivers and motorcycle operators who could no longer bear the situation, were said to have mobilised themselves and attacked some soldiers who mounted a road block in the town.

During the violence, one of the soldiers was reported to have lost his gun to the angry mob and in an effort to recover it, his colleagues resorted to indiscriminate arrest of people in the area, resulting to a renewed fight. As at 4 p.m. all major streets in the town had been deserted as soldiers embarked on stop and search on all vehicles coming from and going to Akure.

It was not certain at press time the number of people so far arrested by the soldiers in connection with the incident, but it was learnt that soldiers had cordoned off all roads leading into the town as they searched for the lost gun.

When contacted, the Police Command's Public Relations Officer, Mr Joshua Olayemi, said he was yet to be briefed on the matter. Efforts to get the state Police Commissioner, Alhaji Sulaiman Fakai, were unsuccessful as his mobile phone rang severally without any response.