

Two dead, 15 injured as traders clash in Ibadan

By Ola Ajayi

IBADAN—THERE was a bloody clash between traders of Agbeni-Ogunpa Market in Ibadan yesterday, leading to the death of two people including one of the policemen dispatched to the scene to restore peace.

Trouble which also left more than 15 people injured began late Tuesday night with a minor misunderstanding between some of the traders. According to an eye witness account, disagreement over the reckless driving of one of the traders popularly called "Big John" triggered the fight that resulted in the loss of property worth over N10million.

It was gathered that some shoe sellers had sent several warnings to him to be considerate and enter into the parking lot with minimum speed to avoid running into people in the ever-busy market. All pleas, the source went on, fell on deaf ears.

Yesterday morning, "Big John" who reportedly felt offended by the effrontery of some the traders to challenge him, invited the police to arrest a man who was wounded the previous night. In addition, it was gathered that he sought the services of some notorious people in the market nicknamed "Oju ina boys" to stage a reprisal attack.

On arrival, they resorted to looting and attacking everybody in sight. At 10am, the crisis spread to other parts of the town like Dugbe-Alawo, Oke-Padre, Ifeleye, Idi-Ikan, Ogunpa, Oopo, Oniyanrin, and Abebi. People were seen

running for their dear lives when the social miscreants (*area boys*) and the police engage themselves in gun duel. Many vehicles were reportedly vandalized and burnt.

When a handful of regular policemen sent to the scene could not match the fire power of the hoodlums, the policemen were said to have escaped from the scene to reinforce. One policeman was reportedly killed by the hoodlums. This angered the policemen who could no longer

withstand affront. In the process, one Saka Gentle was said to have been hit by stray bullet which killed him instantly.

The President of Ogunpa Traders Association, Alhaji Yagbo Yaju hinted newsmen how the whole crisis started. He said: "I was in the hospital to visit a cousin when I got the information that Agbeni market was on fire. As a leader of the market, I quickly ran back to see if I could stop it. When I came, I was astounded at the extent of damage the market had suffered. In fact, it was beyond my control."

Don't politicise Aladejana's suspension, group warns

AKURE—AN interest group, The Ekiti Conscience Group, yesterday, condemned calls for the recall of suspended Justice Jide Aladejana of Ekiti State Judiciary by the National Judicial Council (NJC), describing it as the whipping up of undue sentiment by the Ekiti Justice and Equity Movement (EJEM).

EJEM had, last week-end, demanded pardon for Aladejana who, upon his widely criticized appointment as acting Chief Judge of Ekiti State by the House of Assembly, constituted the seven-man panel whose report led to the purported impeachment of Mr. Ayo Fayose by the lawmakers.

The group, in a statement issued in Ado-Ekiti by its secretary, Mr. Emmanuel Ige, said if any of the suspended judges is to be pardoned by NJC at all, it should be Justice Kayode Bamishile, the Chief Judge who was suspended along with Aladejana.

Ige said Aladejana rubbished the Judiciary by accepting an appointment which he himself knew was illegal and unconstitutional from the House of Assembly.

According to him, Aladejana provided the platform for what President Olusegun Obasanjo described as "serial unconstitutionals" which eventually led to the declaration of a statement of emergency in the state.