

NURTW factions' clash cripples Oshodi market

By Evelyn Usman and Femi Adisa

LAGOS—BUSINESS at the popular Oshodi market in Lagos was yesterday brought to a total standstill following an eruption of a violent clash between factions of the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW), in which four persons were feared dead.

The Oshodi Railway station, part of which was used as store house by some of the traders was totally razed down by the warring factions, destroying goods which monetary value are yet to be estimated. Several commercial buses belonging to rival groups were also burnt while about 15 others had their windcreens shattered.

Vanguard gathered that there had been a lingering feud over leadership of motor parks within and around Oshodi between one Kunle and Olu Omo-Musiliu factions. The latter, according to sources had been in control of majority of the motor parks for several years which did not go down well with his contender. It was against this backdrop that a minor argument said to have occurred between members of factions at a carnival party on Sunday along Oshodi road which degenerated into a fight.

This snowballed into one of the bloodiest clash between the warring factions, when one of them from Mafoluku area reportedly launched an attack on their opponent at Oshodi yesterday. Dangerous weapons such as broken bottles, cutlasses, charms and amulets

were reportedly used by both sides, causing what used to be an ever busy market to be a shadow of itself as both private and commercial vehicles avoided the route. Some of the shops at the market were broken into and wares looted by hoodlums who hijacked the situation.

Commuters on the other hand, were stranded as there were no buses to conveying them to their respective destinations. They were sighted afar from the war zone trying to get an alternative means of transportation.

It took the intervention of

both Mobile and conventional policemen drawn from different divisions and the intimidating presence of two Armored Personnel Carrier (APC) to bring the situation under control. As at 6pm, heavily armed policemen were still patrolling the area to avoid a possible reprisal attack.

Contacted to ascertain if there was any arrest, the Lagos State Police Public Relations Officer, Mr Olubode Ojajuni gave a positive response but could not state the exact figure, saying "Glover, MOPOL 20 and Makinde divisions made some arrests."

Aviation workers threaten strike over pay

By Kenneth Ehigiator & Victor Ahiuma-Young

LAGOS—WORKERS unions in the aviation industry have threatened to shut down the nation's airspace after 21 days which terminates on June 12, 2007, should the federal government fail to pay liquidated Nigeria Airways workers their entitlements.

This came on a day one of the workers, a middle-aged woman, slumped and fainted due reportedly to lack of medicare resulting from insolvency.

The unions, namely the National Union of Air Traffic Employees (NUATE), Air Traffic Services Senior Staff Association of Nigeria (ATSSSAN) and

of the Nigerian airspace.

"In fact, the airspace will be grounded on the expiration of the ultimatum and we will make it difficult for anybody to fly."

Aiyede noted that 55% of gratuities as well as 31 months pension arrears of the workers and pensioners of the liquidated airline were yet to be settled by the federal government, stressing that it was wrong for the president to have unilaterally nullified reports of the inter-ministerial committee created by the senate's intervention on the payment of the entitlements.

According to him, the committee was set up after the senate had, through a public hearing, ascertained that Nigeria Airways workers were public officers whose pensions and