

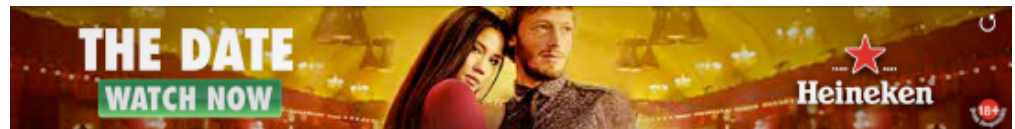
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2 feared dead as transporters clash over ownership of park in Onitsha

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By VINCENT UJUMADU

AWKA—TWO persons were feared dead, yesterday in Onitsha and several others sustained serious injuries when rival groups loyal to two transport companies, Uguchukwu and Sons Limited and Mic Merah International Agency, engaged themselves in a free for all over ownership to the controversial Nwugo Motor Park at the Upper Iweka area of the town.

At the time of this report, stern-looking policemen in Onitsha had cordoned off the entire park and took over security to avert renewed hostilities to ensure security of



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lives and property following reports that the two factions were allegedly perfecting strategies to attack each other.

The incident was said to have started in the early hours of yesterday which prompted the police to storm the park and took control of security.

Addressing reporters yesterday, the manager of Nwugo Park, Chief Gregory Ezechukwu said he received information from his security men that policemen numbering over 50 accompanied by youths wielding machetes had taken over the park at about 3.30 am. Yesterday, lamenting that the incident took place despite court judgments and orders against Mic Merah over the ownership of the park.

He alleged that the Anambra State Police Command had not allowed the Inspector-General of Police, IG, to know about the court judgments and orders secured by Ugochukwu and Sons Limited against Mic Merah International Agency.

He said: “It is unfortunate that the police in Onitsha have compromised themselves and are being used to disobey the valid court judgments and orders we have secured in this matter, by refusing to forward same to the IG and the police legal department.

“The armed thugs who accompanied the policemen, chased away Ugochukwu and Sons staffers, broke into some offices while the policemen were shooting sporadically in the air apparently to scare us away. I had to tell my people to leave because we don’t want to take laws into our hands and we

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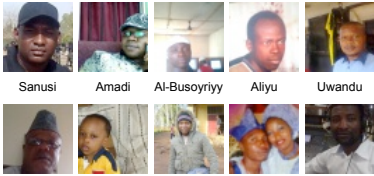
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don't believe in violence, since the court judgment is there.

"I went personally to see the Area Commander and gave him copies of the judgment and orders, but he still went ahead to deploy policemen to take over the park, thereby ignoring the court order, which to me, is an abuse of court process and I know, that the IG is not aware of this development."

He appealed to the IG, Mr. Mohammed Abubakar to order the withdrawal of policemen from the park which he said belonged the Ugochukwu and Sons and urged him to look into the case with a view to restoring the confidence of the people to police.

However, the Area Commander in Onitsha , Mr. Benjamin Wordu said Micmerah got court order which the police sent to the legal department and subsequently ordered the police to enforce the court order.

He however assured that if Ugocukwu and Sons got another court order vacating the subsisting order by Mic Merah, the police would enforce the order, adding that the police were not serving any interest group in the matter.

It will be recalled that an Onitsha High Court, presided over by Justice A . O. Okuma in a judgment on April 19, this year in a suit filed by Ugochuwku and Sons, against Emerah, held that the plaintiffs, Ugochukwu & Sons Limited and the Association of Luxury Bus Owners of Nigeria (ALBON) were not parties to suit

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No. 0/143/2001 in which the defendant, Chief Mike Emerah obtained an interlocutory order in 2001 restraining one Chief Joseph Ejiofor from interfering with his functions at the Nwugo Park.

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