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3 killed as police, Okada operators clash in Lagos

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By Esther Onyegbula

Although normalcy has returned to the area, controversy has continued to trail the alleged killing of three people at Iyana School Bus Stop, along LASU-Iba Road, Lagos State on Friday.

Contrary to reports that commercial cyclists in the area attacked a team of policemen from Isashi Division led by the Station Officer (SO) and the Operations Officer, investigations revealed that policemen from the Division stormed the Okada park at Iyana School Bus Stop, seizing commercial bikes, an action that was met with heavy resistance from the cyclists who alleged that the ban on Okada in Lagos State did not apply to the area.

Trouble started when the officers allegedly started shooting sporadically which sources said resulted in the death of three persons.

A food vendor (Iya Bukola), who claimed to have witnessed the incident, told Sunday Vanguard the story: “We were all here when policemen came to the park and started seizing bikes from the Okada riders. When the Okada riders resisted, they started shooting sporadically and they killed two people instantly while several others escaped with gun shot wounds. When the shooting started I ran out of my shop for fear of being hit by stray bullet. It was while I was running that I fell down and sustained this injury on my leg”, she narrated.

Lamenting, Abimbola Aliu, a commercial cyclist, said, “See how they have changed the story, they said we attacked them. Is it possible for Okada riders to attack the police? The law of restriction on certain routes by the state government does not affect this place. So when they said they were attacked by commercial bike operators at a black spot, they should please show the world where the black spot is at Iyana School Bus Stop. We have been enduring all this intimidation and it has become unbearable. One of the victims was at the car wash when a bullet hit him”.

Confirming the report, Lagos State Deputy Police Public Relations Officer (DPPRO), Mr Lelma Kolle, said police men from Isashi Division were detailed to storm a black spot after receiving series of complaints about criminal activities of hoodlums and, on their way, some Okada riders, who misconstrued the mission of the police, started pelting the team with stones and the police avoiding confrontation with the Okada riders, retreated and ran back to the station

Kolle said the Okada riders pursued the police to the station and attempted to burn down the station.

He said to prevent them from carrying out their dastardly act, the police fired into the air to scare them away but two of the Okada men were shot in the legs.

“As I am talking to you, the two injured persons are responding to treatment in hospital”, he said.

He said that police preliminary investigation showed that some hoodlums who cashed in on the situation later engaged in a free for all and one of them was stabbed to death.

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