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Protest in Aba as soldiers allegedly kill two butchers

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By Ugochukwu Alaribe

ABA—What would have been a major ethnic clash was averted yesterday in Aba, Abia State following protests over alleged killings of two Igbo butchers at the Waterside abattoir by soldiers.

Vanguard gathered that penultimate week, an unnamed soldier in mufti, reportedly went to the abattoir to smoke Indian hemp after which he refused to pay, claiming he was a soldier.

The situation led to a fracas with some boys in the area, who insisted he

must pay, without knowing that the man was a soldier.

The said soldier reportedly came to the abattoir yesterday with four of his colleagues in a Hilux patrol van and started shooting indiscriminately.

There was commotion in the area as butchers and those who came to buy meat scampered to safety and when the shooting died down, a pig rearer, identified as Ojukwu, was found dead.

It was gathered that when some of the butchers, who saw what happened, sought to know from the soldiers what led to their action, that the trigger happy soldiers shot and killed another butcher.

The soldiers reportedly beat four others to pulp and forced them into their van and drove off to an unknown destination.

Their action angered the butchers as they were joined by other people in a protest that spread to all parts of the city.

Attempt by the protesters to dump one the dead bodies they took round the town in a wheel barrow at one of the military posts in the city was aborted by soldiers in full battle gear at the Ogbor Hill waterside bridge.

The protest which began at about 12.00noon later took an ethnic colouration, as the protesters marched towards the Mosque and the Hausa settlement on Hospital Road, but were quickly dispersed by soldiers who kept watch over the places.

As at the time of filing this report, some Hausas in the city had to take refuge at the Aba Police Area command.

When contacted, Commanding Officer, 14 Brigade, Ohafia, Brigadier General Lawrence Fejokwu, said investigations are ongoing to unravel the cause of the incident.

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