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3 killed, many injured as NURTW, RTEAN clash in Lagos

By Godwin Oritse

LAGOS—NO fewer than three persons were reportedly killed and several others sustained various degrees of injuries during a clash between members of the National Union of Road Transport Workers, NURTW and members of the Road Transport Employers Association of Nigeria, RTEAN, Wednesday night at Mile 2 area of the busy Badagry Expressway in Amuwo-Odofin Local Government Area, LGA, of Lagos.

The dead persons, whose names were given as Emma, Rilwan Ege and Shehu Bade, were said to be members of RTEAN.

It was alleged that armed men suspected to be members of NURTW invaded RTEAN Motor Park and shot three members dead while several others were said to have sustained various degrees of injuries.

An earlier attack on Tuesday reportedly

left 15 RTEAN members with gunshot wounds, at the Tin-Can First gate and Fatgbems Gas station on the Apapa/Oshodi expressway.

Investigation revealed that trouble had been brewing since two months ago until it reached its climax on Monday.

According to findings, ticket fee for truck drivers' access into Apapa Ports was the root cause of the fight.

Before now, RTEAN, as gathered issued ticket truck to drivers who are its members at N800.

However, NURTW was said to have forced its way into the toll collection from truck drivers and increased the fee to N2,000.

But RTEAN was said to have kicked against NURTW's involvement, insisting that the NURTW had never been part of the toll collection from onset and that truck drivers were members of RTEAN.

To avoid degeneration of the situation, it was gathered that the Lagos State Government waded into the dispute and

ordered a stoppage of the issuance and collection of ticket or money by either of the parties.

It was however gathered that the toll collection continued unabated until the dispute between them degenerated to violence.

Speaking with *Vanguard* on the alleged invasion of its park on Tuesday night, Vice Chairman of RTEAN in Lagos State, Adeola Adeyemi, said, 'As I speak to you, I am at Area 'E' Festac, to incident the murder case against members of the NURTW.

"I have also officially written to the Special Assistant to the Lagos State Governor on Transportation, Mr. Toyin Fayinka, on the attack. We are still waiting to hear from him."

Part of the petition to Fayinka reads: "I write to officially brief you about the incessant attacks on my life, business and Union by NURTW members under the leadership of the Chairman NURTW Branch 'C', Amuwo Odofin, Prince Ajele Abebi Abayomi, aka 'Ikomodina'.

"I am a man of dual role a legitimate truck owner who own 15 trucks and a bonafide RTEAN member.

"On Wednesday, October 13, 2021 at about 9:15 PM NURTW members again launched another attack on RTEAN Truck Park Mile -2 killing three and injuring 30 people with guns and machetes.

"Based on the attacks, I seek the prompt intervention of the Lagos State Government through the Ministry of Transportation and Office of the Special Adviser to the Governor on Transportation in finding a lasting solution to the attacks by NURTW members."

Efforts to reach NURTW branch leadership proved abortive as calls made to the chairman's phone were not answered nor were text messages sent responded to.

Another attack was foiled by the Police yesterday, as they fired tear gas canisters to disperse some hoodlums who gathered at Mile-2.

Special Assistant to the Lagos State Governor on Transportation, Mr. Toyin Fayinka told *Vanguard* that he was aware of the incident between both unions and had summoned the parties to a meeting.

Fayinka stated: "I am aware of the incident and I have called for a meeting of all the parties involved and this include the State Police Commissioner and Commander, Area 'M'. I have directed that all issuance of ticket and collection of fees from vehicles and trucks be stopped forthwith."

Navy nabs 22 Thai sailors smuggling 32.9kg of cocaine from Brazil