

Unrest as tipper drivers protest killing of colleague in Benin

By Ozioruva Aliu

THERE was a near breakdown of law and order in Benin-City, the Edo State capital, yesterday, as tippers drivers took to the streets to protest the alleged killing of one of them by Department of State Services, DSS, operatives.

The drivers under the aegis of Tipper Drivers Association took over the road leading to the office of the DSS in the state capital with their vehicles that led to gridlock in the city.

There were sporadic gunshots that lasted about 10 minutes during the blockage but for the timely intervention of the Brigade Commander, 4 Brigade of the Nigerian Army, Brigadier-General Sani Abdullahi, who was able to calm the angry drivers and thereafter called for a meeting of the leadership of the drivers and the DSS, which led to the release of the arrested tipper drivers.

It was gathered that the DSS personnel were from an operation in two vehicles with one of the vehicles unmarked and because of the traffic situation caused by a broken down articulated vehicle, they drove against traffic to meet their target.

According to the chairman of the Tipper Drivers Association in Edo State, Austin Uhunmwangho, "This morning (yesterday), there was gridlock and as usual, when there is traffic, our people will make sure that the road is free.

"The DSS vehicles were driving against traffic, so when the drivers found out they were DSS operatives, they asked the cars to pass but refused to pass the second one that was unmarked and asked the driver to go back, not knowing that it was DSS operatives that were also inside the Audi.

"One of the operatives came out from the vehicle and punched the driver in the face, and his face was covered with blood. So when the drivers saw that their person was down, they became angry and caused a scene and that made the operatives called for reinforcement.

When the enforcement came, they started shooting randomly at everybody in our office and one of our members was killed while many were injured."

However, the DSS said in a bid to free kidnapped victims in Ikpoba slope in Ikpoba Okha Local Government Area of Edo State, they were confronted by some hoodlums who wanted to free the kidnappers.