

# 4 feared dead as transport unions clash in Lagos

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**By Godwin Oritse, LAGOS**

NO fewer than four persons were feared killed after a clash between rival groups over the right for the sale of tickets and collection of tolls from truck drivers along the port corridor.

Sources claimed that the clash was between members of the Lagos State Park and Garage Management and other unions that are yet to be identified.

Although Vanguard could not ascertain the names of the victims, an official of the Maritime Workers Union of Nigeria, who said he does not have the authority to speak on the matter, confirmed the death of four of its members, adding that the leadership of the union will issue an official statement on the matter tomorrow.

It would be recalled that members of the Lagos State Parks and Garage Committee, last week, invaded the port's access roads, dislodging members of truckers' unions and selling tickets to truck drivers at the second gate of the Tin-Can Island Port in Apapa.

A visit to the port by our correspondent showed that members of the committee came into the ports as early as 9 am with about 200 members, alongside policemen from the Rapid Response Squad, RRS.

Vanguard gathered that they chased other touts that had been collecting tolls at the ports and began to issue tickets at N4,000.

As the crisis brewed, Vanguard gathered that the Port Police Commissioner, Mr Taiwo Adeleke, who was alerted of the situation, made a distress call to the Commissioner of Police, Mr Abiodun Alabi, and the Head of RRS to ascertain if they were aware of the presence of the Parks and Garage Committee in the port.

It further gathered that both Adeleke and Alabi said they were oblivious of the visit, a development that made Adeleke visit the scene.

Immediately members of the Parks Committee with their Police escort sighted CP Adeleke, they took to their heels.

Information at Vanguard's disposal revealed that members of the committee had collected tolls for about two hours before the arrival of CP Adeleke.

Reacting to the development, Chairman of the Lagos State Park and Garage Management, Mr Musiliu Akinsanya, said he does not think that his boys were behind the attack because their operation has nothing to do with the port environment.

He said: "Maybe some people went there to cause trouble under the name of Lagos State Park and Garage Management but I am very sure our members did not attack because our operations are not within the port environment."

Also speaking on the development, an official of MOB Resources Limited, operators of MOB Truck Park, said: "MOB Tin-Can is currently closing its gate as there is a serious brawl between rival gangs. Once things normalise, we can open our gate. This is to secure lives and property within our premises."

A truck owner, who simply identified himself as Michael, said: "It is unfortunate that a city, which prides itself as a mega city would allow such nonsense to happen."