

3 feared dead as RTEAN rival groups clash in Lagos

●LASG reads riot act, probes fracas

By **Olasunkanmi Akoni**

LAGOS—NO fewer than three members of a rival group belonging to Road Transport Employers Association of Nigeria, RTEAN, were feared dead while several others sustained injuries during a clash at Iyana-Iba, Ojo Local Government Area of Lagos State, yesterday.

It was learned that a similar clash happened in Surulere area between transport unions.

It was gathered that the clash, which started in the early hours was due to tussle over the control and right for the sale of tickets and collection of tolls from commercial buses at Ojo park and environs.

The fracas followed protest by some RTEAN members demanding the removal of the National President of the association over alleged meddlesomeness.

One of the leaders of a rival group, Babatunde Kazeem, accused the National President of RTEAN, Musa Muhammed of meddling in the affairs and management of the state's union for selfish interest.

According Kazeem, "three of our members have been killed by the invading rival group sponsored by the national body, while one other is on danger list at the hospital where he was rushed to.

"Muhammad can't be the president of the union and at the same time chairman of the state.

"We need caretaker committee to run the affairs of the union pending election

of substantive officers. He is intimidating us with the use of law enforcement agencies. We do not want war in RTEAN Lagos State, we want peace.

"We, hereby, call on Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu to intervene by calling the National President and his boys to order before the crisis snowballs into full scale violence."

However, it took the intervention of the state Police Command to douse and restored normalcy to the area as the warring groups were dispersed.

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At an emergency meeting with a faction of the group, in Alausa, Special Adviser to the Governor on Transportation, Sola Giwa, called on the warring factions to sheath their swords or face the dire consequences as Police had been alerted and directed to arrest anyone caught disturbing the peace and tranquillity of the state.

Giwa said the state government had commenced full investigation into the fracas at Ojo and Surulere areas of the state with a view to preventing the breakdown of law and order.

He said: "We have commenced investigation into the allegations levelled against the National President of the union with the aim of resolving every lingering issue. Therefore, everyone must maintain the peace.

"The government has listened to your cries, we urge you to maintain the peace as we will not hesitate to apply the full weight of the law on erring members when caught."