

4 killed, policeman, others injured in Lagos pandemonium



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...As police declare businessman wanted

By Esther Onyegbulam & Efe Onodjæ

LAGOS—Pandemonium broke out in Owode Onirin, Kosofe Local Government Area of Lagos State, following a bloody clash between land grabbers and traders, which left three persons dead.

Others, including a policeman, sustained injuries.

Meanwhile, business activities at Balogun Market, Lagos Island, were brought to a standstill yesterday, when a fight between two market runners spiralled into a violent confrontation that left one person dead and several others injured.

However, the Lagos State Police Command has clarified that the Balogun incident was not a tribal clash but a fight involving miscreants and hoodlums around the market.

Vanguard gathered that a man, being escorted into Lagos by armed men, allegedly directed some hoodlums to forcibly evacuate shop owners and mechanics in a bid to take over the area. Resistance by traders and mechanics triggered a free-for-all, during which eyewitnesses said three traders were shot dead and others were injured.

The violence prompted angry traders to block the road in and out of Owode Onirin to protest the killings.

Commenting on the crisis, spokesman for the Lagos State Police Command, Benjamin Hundeyin, explained that the Commissioner of Police, Lagos State Command, Olohundare Moshood, led a combined team of operatives, including personnel from the Operations Department, Mobile Police, Rapid Response Squad, tactical squads, and detectives from the State Criminal Investigation Department, SCID, to the affected area.

He said normalcy had been restored and the roads reopened to traffic and lawful business.

Police declare businessman wanted

Preliminary investigation, according to him, revealed that “one Abiodun Ariori, CEO of Prosperous Ariori Golden Venture Limited, is connected to the deadly clash between the traders and land grabbers.

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“He is hereby declared wanted by the Lagos State Police Command as all efforts to effect his arrest and bring him to justice have so far proved abortive. It is very clear that he has gone into hiding.

“In furtherance of ensuring justice and in compliance with the directive of the Commissioner of Police, four policemen, brought in from outside Lagos State by the wanted land grabber, were immediately identified and detained at the Command Headquarters for orderly room trial for embarking on illegal duty with the suspect. The outcome of investigations and the trial of the policemen will be made public.”

One killed in Balogun fracas

Meanwhile, tension heightened in Balogun Market, Lagos, following a disagreement over the sharing of money from a completed transaction between two middlemen, popularly called Osuaiya. The quarrel turned violent when one of them stabbed the other, prompting a reprisal that left him dead.

Clarifying the incident, Hundeyin said: “The Lagos State Police Command wishes to inform the public that there was no tribal clash or disturbance between ethnic groups inside Balogun Market. What occurred was a free-for-all between some hoodlums and miscreants in the market about 11a.m.

“During the fight, one Ebuka Adindu from Abia State stabbed one Sodiqlbrahim from Kogi State to death. In turn, Ebuka stabbed himself on the shoulder and became unconscious. He is currently under arrest at the hospital where he is being treated.

“Investigation will be concluded and he will be prosecuted once discharged. There was no loss of innocent lives or damage to traders’ goods and properties.”

He assured that normalcy has since been restored.

