

Police kill 5 BENSU students

SIMON
Makurdi

IMOBO-TSWAN,

(BENSU), Makurdi, at the weekend lost their lives in a violent clash between students of the institution and anti-riot policemen.

NO fewer than five students of Benue State University

Among the casualties of

the incident, which police and government officials described as "exchange of fire between students and mobile police personnel" is a 400 level Sociology student

of the institution, Iorlun Adyorough.

The incident has prompted the university's authorities to

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close the school.

Trouble, *Daily Champion* gathered, started Saturday night when a hit and run driver knocked down two undergraduates, Mr. Shima Ikpe and Miss Stella Egbo.

This resulted to obstruction of vehicular movement on the Gboko-Makurdi road between 9.30 p.m. Saturday and late Sunday afternoon by protesting students, who made bon fires as well as threw petrol bombs.

While Miss Egbo, passed on Sunday and her remains have been deposited in one of the mortuaries in Makurdi, Ikpe is still battling to survive at the Federal Medical Centre, Makurdi.

But in an exclusive interview with *Daily Champion*, the Benue State Police Commissioner, Mr. Ibe Aghanya, down-played the figure, saying "only one student died in yet to be determined circumstances". He further disclosed that 30 people have so far been arrested in connection with the weekend riots, noting that of the 30 arrested, while 17 were bona-fide students of the university, 13 were hoodlums who joined in the students' riot to breach public peace.

Aghanya said in the exchange of fire that followed and claimed Adyorough's life, a Police Sergeant, Mr. Solomon Gaiya, sustained serious head injuries as he attempted to save the rifle and life of Mr. Usang, the Area Commander of Makurdi Metropolis.

His words: "Besides my police officers, a driver with Benue Links, Mr. One Emmanuel Isaiah, was also given matchet wounds. The 17 students have been released on bail to the university authorities but the other 13 would soon be charged to court."

At a later joint press conference hosted by the State Commissioner of Information, Mr. Cletus Akwaya; the State Police Commissioner, Mr. Ibe Aghanya, and the Dean of Students Affairs, Prof. Nicholas Adah at the Conference Hall of the Information Ministry, Akwaya commended the police for containing the crisis with minimum loss to human lives, observing that "without their mature handling of the matter in the face of obvious provocation, casualties could have been higher."

He advised students to be more careful in their use of both intra and inter-city road and added that work on the pedestrian crossing at the University gate would be expedited to minimize accidents.

The Dean of Students Affairs, Prof. Adah, while answering questions from journalists said the university would be re-opened as soon as the situation normalizes as the authorities of the institution "are keen on making sure that final year students of the university do not miss the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) scheme which is coming up in February.