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[Nigeria: Police Deny Opening Fire On Nasarawa Protesters](#)

Hir Joseph

21 October 2009

Lafia — The police in Nasarawa State yesterday denied opening fire on protesters on Monday at Garaku, a town along the Keffi-Akwanga road where irate youths barricaded the federal highway to protest the incessant killing of their people by speeding motorists.

The Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO) ASP Richard Akoji confirmed that rioters and some policemen received varying degrees of injuries from the incident, but did not confirm any killing.

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A witness said a woman and a youth were shot and killed in the process. This was corroborated by the House of Assembly member representing Kokona-West, Alhaji Ishaq Ahmed Kala. Garaku is Kokona West headquarters. The lawmaker said there was no point for the police to use coercive force, since, according to him, it was a peaceful demonstration. He said upon arriving at the scene of the protest, the armed policemen did not

attempt to speak to them, but began to fire tear-gas at them. He said 54 persons were receiving treatment for various degrees of injuries inflicted on them by the police.

But the police spokesman said the policemen sent to the trouble spot never opened fire on the protesters, saying, "I have not received any report that they shot two people. Nobody was shot". He said those wounded were "not shot at. No bullet wound", adding, "I think may be sharp object, all these sticks and the rest of them."

The protest which lasted for five hours from 6:00 am stopped when anti-riot policemen dislodged the irate youths who held up the Minister of State for Information Ikra Bilbis and the NTA Director General Usman Magawata and forced them to abort their trip to Otukpo in Benue State where they were billed to commission an NTA sub-station.

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