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Many feared killed in Abuja communal clash

By Hussein Yahaya & Taiwo Awoniyi

Residents, mostly non-indigenes have started leaving Garam, a village sharing boundary with Bwari town in Tafa Local Government Area of Niger State over communal clashes that rocked the village on Monday.

Witnesses said over ten Hausa residents were killed in the incident after a minor disagreement between an indigene of the community and some Hausa merchants.

A witness, John Musa, who narrated the incident to Daily Trust, said the incident began on Saturday when a Gbagyi boy, who was riding a motorcycle, accused some Hausa traders of displaying their wares close to the main road, thereby blocking the road.

"After the argument, the native left, only to return with another boy and started challenging the Hausa traders for extending their wares to the main road," he said.

He alleged that in the process, an Hausa man brought out a knife and stabbed one of the natives in the stomach and that he was rushed to a hospital in Sabo-Wuse where he was given first aid treatment before he was transferred to Bwari Medical Centre, where he died on Sunday evening.

According to the witness, after the announcement of the death of the boy, some natives went on rampage and started attacking the Hausa speaking residents.

Another resident, who is now taking refuge at Kuduru, a neighbouring community in Bwari Area Council, said many Hausa were killed in the process, saying one of them was hacked to death in her presence.

"In fact, they had wanted to kill me if not for the intervention of some natives, who saved me," she said.

When Daily Trust visited the traditional ruler of the community, he was said to be attending a security meeting at Sabo-Wuse but a staff of the palace confirmed the incident but declined comment on the number of casualties.

He said many residents of the communities including the natives have fled the area for fear of the unknown.

Abubakar Garba, a Hausa resident who also teaches about 42 children Islamic study said four of the children were injured and taken to the hospital by a woman.

"We were at the school when about 100 armed natives surrounded the school, all the children to run into the bush, one of them was however caught and a plank was used to hit him on the head while three others sustained several injuries," he said.

Garba said it took the intervention of some residents before all the children could be gathered adding that he has concluded plans to return them to their parents in Kano.

When contacted, Bwari Divisional Police Officer, Superintendent Cocker Shado, confirmed the incident but said it did not happened under his jurisdiction.

He said his men are currently mounting surveillance at the FCT border with the community to prevent possible escalation to the FCT.

Also, Press Secretary to Bwari Council Chairman, Daodu Dasha, said the council has put necessary measures in place to prevent the crises from escalating to the FCT.