

Police Officer Arrested As Soldier Shot Dead In Bauchi



By Ahmed Mohammed

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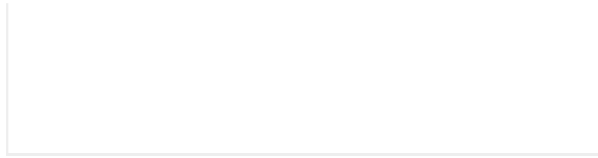


A police officer has been arrested over the killing of a soldier in Futuk, Alkaleri Local Government Area of Bauchi State.

The acting Assistant Director, Army Public Relations, 33 Artillery Brigade, Atang Hallet Solomon, confirmed the incident to our reporter.

He said the officer, who allegedly shot the soldier dead, has been taken into custody, adding that the case is currently under joint investigation by the Police and the Army.

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Hallet said discussions were ongoing between the two security agencies to ensure a thorough investigation and to prevent further escalation.

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Local hunters and vigilantes in Futuk said the incident followed a dispute between security operatives over a truck allegedly belonging to a Chinese mining company.

They said the truck, loaded with minerals from the Yalo mining site, was intercepted on Monday evening shortly after Maghrib prayers.

Witnesses said troops of the 33 Artillery Brigade, Bauchi, had ordered the driver of the truck, bearing registration number Gombe 676 BLG, to stop at a checkpoint in Futuk. When the driver refused, the soldiers pursued and intercepted the vehicle near a bridge.

“A scuffle then broke out between the commanding officer of the soldiers and the MOPOL officer escorting the truck. During the altercation, the policeman allegedly raised his rifle and shot the army officer in the back, a witness, who preferred to be anonymous, said.

Residents said panic gripped the community as traders and shopkeepers hurriedly closed their businesses, fearing violence. In the ensuing confusion, the truck driver fled.

Senior officials of Alkaleri Local Government, however, commended the soldiers for exercising restraint.

The officials said instead of retaliating, they arrested both the driver and the MOPOL officer after disarming him, before transferring them to Bauchi for further action.

The hunters said the wounded soldier was rushed to a hospital in Gombe, but later died from his injuries. His remains have been deposited at the hospital morgue, with burial arrangements

ongoing in line with military tradition.

It was gathered that the MOPOL officer remains in custody, while the intercepted truck has been impounded.

Efforts to reach the Bauchi State Police Command were unsuccessful, as the Police Public Relations Officer, DSP Mohammed Ahmed Wakil, did not respond to calls or messages at the time of filing this report.

Local hunters alleged that the truck was conveying solid minerals suspected to have been illegally extracted from the Yalo community in the LGA and that the police inspector may have been on an unlawful escort mission.

They noted that the refusal of the truck to stop at the checkpoint, the decision of a trained police officer to open fire on soldiers, and the driver's escape all raised suspicions that only a thorough investigation can clarify.

The local government officials further said the involvement of security operatives in illegal mining activities was becoming a disturbing trend and called on higher authorities to address compromises within the security system.

Meanwhile, Daily Trust learnt that the Bauchi State Commissioner of Police has met with the Commander of the 33 Artillery Brigade, Brig.-Gen. U.J. Simon, to ease tensions and ensure the case is handled appropriately.