

Violent Clashes On The Campus, Three Feared Dead

From Lawrence Njoku, Enugu

THREE persons were feared dead and several others seriously injured yesterday, when hundreds of students of the University of Nigeria Nsukka (UNN), poured into the streets, in protest of an increment in fees by the University authority.

The students were protesting an alleged astronomical increase in school fees introduced by the administration of the Vice Chancellor, Prof. Bartholomew Okolo, who they accused of being adamant to their entreaties for a resolution of the brewing crisis.

The disturbance had started last Thursday at the University Secondary School, where a N60,000 levy was said to have been imposed without any explanation, a ploy parents saw as the introduction of a 100 per cent increase in fees.

About 22 cars and buses, belonging to the university and individuals were destroyed in the protest, which started at 7:00 am yesterday, and continued till late evening.

The demonstrators also destroyed windows at the vice chancellors lodge just as they did at the pro-chancellor's residence being used temporarily by the VC.

The students sacked all principal officers of the university. The librarian, with the help of a security staff, was said to have escaped from the vice chancellor's lodge, having scaled its high fence.

Apart from taking over the town, the students defied security operatives and moved about five kilometers along the Enugu- Benue federal highway, where they held up traffic for over three hours.

Three female students, who spoke to *The Guardian* in front of Queen of the Rosary College, Enugu, explained that the situation had become unbearable, as the Vice Chancellor was insisting that the fees allegedly being increased by some 300 per cent would not be reversed.

One of them, who said she was a second-year student of Sociology said that "for this running session, I have paid N30,000, but what the VC is introducing is that we will now pay N90,000. He has increased hostel accommodation from N9,000 to N35,000 for the female students."

A final year student (name withheld) explained that apart from the school fees going high in an unimagin-

able dimension, "the VC has also proposed an increase in the convocation fee to be paid by graduating students from N4,000 or N6,000 to N40,000. Can you imagine that?"

For incoming students, who picked shopping forms at the sum of N10,000 each, those who are admitted will pay an acceptance fee of N25,000 each. That is up from the N6,000 fee introduced by the immediate past administration. Yet, they are to pay fees allegedly amounting to N120,000.

Enough Is Enough, Says Student Leader

In the heat of protests by the students, ONYEKA NWELUE spoke to one of the Student Union leaders.

University of Nigeria students have been known to be 'quiet' and 'calm'. What started the protests? It's because of the demolitions, the school fee and accommodation fee increase.

The Nebo administration did not face this sort of uprising.

He has disappointed us. Since he is too big to see the SUG, will he ever see Nigerian students? He promised not to touch the acceptance fee, but he did, meaning he has taken us for a ride and we must fight back. Look at the range of increment. Acceptance fee increased from N6,000 naira to N25,000 naira. School fee rose from N21,000 to over 80,000. Where will the poor get the money? Why were Federal Universities established? Is it no longer the right of Nigerian students to get educated at an affordable fee? We are tired of this. The song the students are now singing is that the man should leave. They are carrying a coffin to show their grievances and to show their disapproval. Imagine, some military men came into our hostels, smashed doors, picked phones and shot at students. Had the boy who was shot not dodged the bullet, he would have been dead. At the female hostels, they used machetes on students. How does that sound? And do you want us

At the height of the rampage, some of the protesters, at Ede-Oballa town near Nsukka, disarmed two policemen, firing the arms until the ammunition were exhausted.

Police source at the Opi Junction of expressway said that a policeman was shot at the arm. The female student who was shot met her cruel fate when police earlier confronted the protesters within the university premises. But details of her identities were not available immediately.

to keep quiet? Our rights have been trampled upon and we must get them back. Bartho should go!

It is believed that most UNN students are frustrated and will even leave. What efforts are you putting in place to make them stay back?

We are out to stand and fight for the rights of Nigerian students. That man has messed us up enough. Enough is enough. Nigerian students will stay and fight!

Do you fear any reprisal from the university authority?

This struggle is a sacrifice. Man lives to die only once. You cannot get your rights on a platter of gold. It comes through struggle. It is the right of every Nigerian student to be educated at an affordable fee. But is this the case with Nigerian students? Will our parents suffer for long under these conditions? They call us leaders of tomorrow. But let's be truthful, is there any tomorrow for us? They've stolen it from us, intimidated and molested us enough. We'll now fight to get back that tomorrow! They have all failed. They should go and rest and leave us to handle our future ourselves. I'm using this medium to inform the appropriate authorities, to tell those military men and MOPOL who molested, shot and stole the phones of Nigerian students that they'll pay for it. A young boy was shot at the mouth, while a female was shot at the leg. You'll not molest Nigerian students forever. Enough is enough!