

Jos monarch relocates from palace as 12 die in violence

From Isa Abdulsalami, Jos

It was a meal he loved dearly but did not live to prepare and savour its rich taste yesterday. When he left his house in Jos metropolis for shopping in a nearby market, the victim, a policeman, never knew that it would be his last outing.

And yesterday, this Anti-Bomb Squad Mobile policeman deployed in Jos, Plateau

State for peacekeeping was killed, and sadly by a butcher that he bought beef from.

Although police authorities in the state refused to give his identity, it was a sad end for the officer and 12 others, who were killed yesterday in the latest violence in the crisis-ridden state.

According to witnesses, the policeman approached the butcher near the burnt Abuja Market at the Termini-

Area to buy beef. The bargaining was reportedly smooth, yet the butcher killed the security operative by ripping off his stomach with a knife. *The Guardian* learnt that an agreement was reached by the duo but while the policeman was waiting to take possession of the beef and pay the seller, the butcher acted otherwise: Instead of cutting the beef into smaller sizes, the

butcher with the sharp knife went for the bowel of the bomb expert, and within a twinkle of an eye, ripped it open with the intestines gushing out. He watched the policemen as he gasped for breath, slumped and died on the spot.

"As this happened, there was confusion and youths who watched the scenario played out took to violence. The ensuing confusion led to

both traders and residents fleeing into different directions. Before you know it, four people were found lying on the ground dead. At Ahmadu Bello Way, a commercial motorcyclist (*okada* rider in local parlance) was hacked to death, and his motorcycle set ablaze. That was not all. His killers threw him into the fire," a resident, who

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claimed to be at the scene, said.

At the Evangel Hospital, Jos, some hoodlums mounted a roadblock where three residents riding motorcycles and probably caught in-between the scene, were killed, another resident said. There were also claims that four people were killed at Gada-Biu and burnt.

As the metropolis boiled, the Gbong Gwon Jos, Da Jacob Gyang Buba, was quickly moved out of his palace to his Du residence. The monarch's palace is close to the Central Mosque, the scene of the violence and where Muslims in the area were observing *Maulud Nabbiy* (Prophet Mohammed's birthday) with Quranic recitation.

The situation was hijacked

by hoodlums who burnt tyres, vehicles and motorcycles in the area.

Before the outbreak of the violence, the usual parade by the Quranic students to mark the *Maulud Nabbiy* was not observed at the popular Rwang Pam Township Stadium.

The Muslims who confined themselves to the Central Mosque however rushed out

as sporadic shootings by the security operatives rent the air: "It was to avoid problems that we did not march to our usual venue which is the stadium," one of the students said.

It took the intervention of the Commander, Special Task Force (STF), Brig.-Gen. Hassan Umaru, to persuade them to return to their mosque.

The spokesman of the STF,

Captain Charles Ekeocha, said he could not comment on the issue because he was too busy.

When contacted, the state Police Commissioner, Mr. Abdulrahman Akano, confirmed that "one Anti-Bomb Squad Mobile Policeman was stabbed to death by some area boys."

Akano said the police had already arrested four of the

hoodlums found with a chemical substance called *solution*, which hoodlums in the North sniff. He said they had not started interrogating them, adding that "as far as I am concerned, it is the death of my man that I am aware of." Akano further said he was not in the picture of what happened in other places that the crisis had spread to.

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