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# Police chief, others killed in Shiites protest

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- **Protesters burn NEMA office, vehicles**
- **We lost 11 members, says Islamic sect**
- **Why north is tolerating bad governance, by Sani**

A fresh protest against the continued detention of the Islamic Movement of Nigeria (IMN) leader, Ibrahim El-Zakzaky and his wife, yesterday claimed the life of a Deputy Commissioner of Police, Umar Usman. Usman was struck with a sharp object while trying to pacify the protesters. The police chief who was in charge of operations at the Federal Territory Police Command was taken to a hospital where he eventually died.

The protest by members of IMN, also known as Shiites, which began at the NITEL Junction at Wuse 2, Abuja was disrupted by armed policemen who had cordoned off the road leading to the National Assembly and the Three Arms Zone.

Commercial activities at the Central Business District came to a halt as people ran for their lives. The sect members had defiled the security arrangement to checkmate their protest as they invaded the Federal Secretariat, attempting to gain access to the National Assembly.

The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) outpost at the Federal Secretariat was overrun, with the building, an ambulance and another vehicle razed down. The Guardian learnt that no fire service officer was seen at the scene of the incident as fire razed down the entire outpost and the vehicles.

The secretariat's car park was not spared of the attack, as five cars belonging to civil servants were also set ablaze. Explosions from the burning cars rent the air as many workers scampered for safety. But the security operatives successfully prevented the Shiites from entering the National Assembly. Many people were injured in the violent clash.

Yesterday's incident came about two weeks after two Shiites were killed and two police officers injured in a similar protest that turned violent at the National Assembly complex in Abuja.

Following the violent protest at the National Assembly, the police last week directed that protests in Abuja be limited to the Unity Fountain, near the Transcorp Hilton Hotel, Abuja.

The Inspector General of Police (IGP), Mohammed Adamu, briefed President Muhammadu Buhari on the yesterday's bloody protest by the Shiites.



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Buhari at the closed-door meeting directed the police boss to take steps to protect all Nigerians wherever they may be.

Speaking with journalists after the meeting, the IGP said: “We came this morning to brief Mr. President on the security situation in the country, especially the activities of the IMN. Just to give him an update of what is happening in the country vis a vis their activities.

“Specifically, we briefed him of the incessant act coming out of this group of people, protesting here and there. We briefed him on the fact that we have been able to curtail their excesses, and to let him understand that everything is under control.”

On the president’s reaction, Adamu said: “The president asked us to make sure we provide security for every citizen of this country and not to leave any space that some group of people will create for breakdown of law and order.”

The police, in a statement, confirmed the killing of Commissioner Umar by the Shiites protesters. The Force Public Relations Officer, DCP Frank Mba, said the officer who was immediately rushed to the hospital died moments later while receiving treatment.

“Also, two assistant superintendents of police and an employee of Channels Television sustained serious injuries and are currently receiving treatment.

“Another violent protest by members of the El-Zakzaky group involving over 3000 of its followers took place today, 22nd July, 2019 at about 12:30p.m. within the Central Business District of Abuja.

“The heavily armed protesters defying all sense of decency violently attacked innocent citizens and police personnel on duty. The violent protesters also razed down a NEMA Response Post close to the Federal Secretariat, Abuja and two vehicles.”

The Shiites in Abuja yesterday said they lost about 11 members, while 30 other sustained severe injuries.



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The IMN spokesman, Mallam Ibrahim Musa, in a statement said: “What actually happened was that the protesters started the procession from NITEL junction and on getting to the Federal Secretariat, the police cordoned off the road and started firing at them.

“A lot of people have been shot, but for now we can only confirm 11 deaths. Also, several protesters have been injured, the figure for now stands at 30. However, we are aware of the fact that the security agents have been going around taking off those they killed from the streets.

“Even some seriously injured persons that were taken to Abuja University Teaching Hospital, Gwagwalada, the police went there and took away about 11 people they shot during the protest.”

“We strongly dispute the claim by the police that the protesters shot at them because throughout our processions we have not been carrying any arms right from 2015 to date.”

Meanwhile, the senator who represented Kaduna Central at the Eighth Senate, Shehu Sani, has accused the north of tolerating bad governance in the country because one of their own, Buhari, is in power.

Sani, who was the guest speaker at a conference held to prepare emerging leaders in Kaduna yesterday, said the north had failed to hold President Buhari accountable despite the unabated killings and destruction of property in the region.

The former lawmaker, who expressed worry over the high rate of poverty and educational backwardness in the north, asked President Buhari to do something fast to tackle the issues now, warning that the region was under a time bomb. He urged Buhari to come out with sound policies to address the high-level poverty and educational challenge in the region and the country at large.

“The north is tolerant of bad government because Buhari is in government and he is from the north. When powers move to the south, the north is good in holding leaders to account, but when it moves to the north, we keep silent. We are shy, we are cautious, we are afraid of telling our own that the road in the north is bad. We are more courageous to tell the truth to power when the president doesn’t come from our region.

“Southerners are holding him to account. Here in the north, you don’t because they are shy, they believe he is infallible and that he cannot be called to question.

“If 50 people were killed in Katsina and the representative of the state is not ready to stand up in the senate to talk about his people being killed, then it will go on and nobody will know. But if Fasoranti’s daughter is killed and the representative from Fasoranti stands up and condemns the murder, the world will know.

“But if your people are dying here and the people you elected are afraid of being embarrassed and they don’t want to be categorised as being disloyal and being seen in the bad book, they will kill as many as possible and the perception of the people outside will be that all is well. So the north must not be docile because one of his own is in office,” Sani maintained.

He also said northern leaders had failed to use the opportunity of office to upgrade the north and the country.

“How do you solve the problem of poverty when the three most industrialised states in the north— Kaduna, Plateau and Kano— have 80 per cent of their industries closed down?

“For this country to survive, President Buhari must listen to the voices of reason. You may not like the faces of Wole Soyinka, Balarabe Musa, and Olusegun Obasanjo but



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read through the content of what they have written and see where adjustment can be made.

“He (Buhari) must be interested in his legacy and he has only four years. In any government, after two years, there will be heat and once it starts, you will not be able to concentrate and do your work.”

In this article:

Ibrahim el-Zakzaky

IMN

Islamic Movement of Nigeria

Nema