



## Metro

## Soldier allegedly kills UNIJOS student during lockdown in Jos

By Isa Abdulsalami Ahovi,  
Jos  
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The whole of Mission Street, Hwolshe in Jos South local government area of Plateau State, was thrown into mourning late Tuesday night following the shooting of a 20-year-old boy, Mr. Rinji Peter Bala, by security operatives.

An eyewitness and friend of the deceased who gave his name as Mr. Gwom, alleged that a soldier of the Nigerian Army opened fire at Bala.

Gwom said Bala, a 300-Level student of the University of Jos (UNIJOS), was arrested at about 7:00p.m. in his neighborhood, Hwolshe, during lockdown.

In his words: “Myself and six others were whisked to Sector 1 headquarters of the Special Task Force near Jos Zaria Road stadium in a military patrol van. They didn’t tell us our offence, but tortured us for over an hour before releasing us.

“At the gate, some soldiers asked us to run. When we took off, they opened fire. Bobo (Rinji Peter Bala) fell few meters from the gate (Sector Command entrance). I stopped to help him up but a soldier came close, with his gun pointed at me but turned back when another soldier shouted “ceasefire”.

Bala and other family members were deeply grieving and unable to talk to the press as sympathizers storm the family residence in Hwolshe yesterday.

When contacted, Media Officer of Operation Safe Haven, Major Ibrahim Shittu, regretted the death of Rinji Bala by its personnel. “At about 10:00p.m. on Tuesday, we received information on the activities of armed and cult activities operating in Jos South, who took advantage of the lockdown to perpetrate crimes.

“Sector 1 Patrol Team responded and arrested seven of them and moved them to the headquarters of Sector 1 for preliminary investigation. Five of them were cleared and then asked to leave the premises. But as they were leaving, one of the personnel on sentry duties mistook them for escaping suspects and opened fire on them. One of them died. Investigation is ongoing.”

It would be recalled that Plateau State has been in and out of lockdown for close to two months now, which has brought so much hardship on many of its residents with the government giving the period of restocking from Midnight of every Thursday to Midnight of every Sunday.

However, when contacted, Spokesman of the Plateau State Police Command, ASP Ubah Ogaba, said, “We heard about the incident, through the DPO in charge of that area, that some youths were apprehended by the members of the OPSH, and that a young man who was said to be among those apprehended died.

Ogaba added that “We don’t have the details of what transpired, so this all I can say for now.

“But an investigation into the incident has commenced already”, he maintained.



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