

CP orders probe into alleged killing by anti-narcotic officer in Kaduna

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Bonfire set by the protesters

The Kaduna State Commissioner of Police, Rabi'u Muhammad, has ordered an investigation into the alleged killing of a youth by a personnel of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) in Barnawa, a suburb of the state capital.

The Guardian learnt that the young man was allegedly gunned down on Monday by the anti-narcotics operative, who was in pursuit of a suspected drug dealer.

The incident sparked a violent protest and led to the closure of popular social spots in the Barnawa area by angry youths. The situation could have escalated into chaos but for the timely intervention of security operatives in the state.

Confirming the incident yesterday, the spokesperson for the command, DSP Mansir Hassan, said in a WhatsApp message to journalists that the Commissioner of Police had ordered a full-scale investigation into the matter.

Additional police patrol vans were later deployed to Barnawa to restore peace and order.

Eyewitnesses said the deceased was shot by an NDLEA operative during the chase of a suspected drug dealer. According to residents, the shooting occurred near a busy junction in Barnawa market, a densely populated area known for its vibrant nightlife.

One of the witnesses, who gave his name simply as Musa, told journalists that the NDLEA operatives had stormed the area in an unmarked vehicle and were chasing a young man suspected of having narcotics when the tragedy occurred.

“We were all here when the NDLEA men chased somebody. They were shouting at him to stop. Then one of them fired a shot and it hit a completely different person who was just passing by. That boy had nothing to do with the matter. He was innocent,” Musa said.

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The victim’s identity had not been officially released at press time, but residents described him as a “quiet and hardworking young man” who lived in the Barnawa neighbourhood.

In the aftermath of the shooting, angry youths barricaded the main road leading into Barnawa from Aliyu Makama, burning bonfires, chanting slogans and vowing not to leave until justice was served.

Another protester, who identified herself as Aisha, said the shooting was “one killing too many” in the community.

“We are tired of security agents killing our brothers and sisters over nothing. They always say they are chasing criminals, but innocent people end up dying. We want the government to take action. This must not be swept under the carpet,” she fumed.

The protest, which began around 6:00 p.m. on Monday, disrupted vehicular movement and forced many business owners to shut their shops for fear of escalation. Popular entertainment spots, bars and eateries in the area also closed, leaving the usually lively streets unusually quiet.

A commercial tricycle operator, Bello Musa, told journalists that he had to take alternative routes to drop passengers as the main road remained blocked for hours.

“I have never seen Barnawa like this. The road was blocked with tyres and stones. People were shouting and security people were nowhere to be found at first. Everybody was afraid,” Bello said.