

Five Feared Dead As Students, Police Clash

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No fewer than five students of the College of Education, Zuba, in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), were feared dead following a clash between students of the school and the Police on Saturday.

There was no official confirmation of the exact casualty figures from the FCT Police Command at press time, but no fewer than 15 students were said to have been shot at by the police.

Trouble was said to have started when one of the students went across the new extension of the college to pluck some ripe mangoes.

Many students were said to be in the habit of using the shelter provided by the mango trees to read, especially in these days of excessive heat at the FCT.

The student, whose identify

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could not readily be ascertained was said to have plucked a mango fruit when a police constable attached to the Zuba Police Station allegedly arrested him, accusing him of going to the mango orchard to smoke Indian hemp (marijuana).

As the policeman attempted to drag the student to the police station, the student was said to have raised alarm, which attracted his fellow students to the scene.

Soon, his fellow students

were said to have gathered and succeeded in rescuing their colleague.

It was not clear how the police left the student who was being accused of smoking Indian hemp to arrest one of the students that negotiated his rescue.

The trouble shooting student was subsequently taken to the police station and detained.

When news of the arrest and detention of the student filtered into the College, a large number of students were said to have mobilised and stormed

the police station to try to free one of their own.

But on arrival at the station, the students discovered that the arrested student had been beaten to pulp.

The students demanded that their colleague be taken to the hospital for treatment, but the police refused, thus leading to a bitter argument and eventual shooting of a student in the stomach by a policeman.

The student was reported to have died immediately.

In the violent confrontation that ensued

between the students who allegedly stormed the station in their hundreds, the police were alleged to have opened fire, shooting down no fewer than 15 students.

Provost of the College of Education, which belongs to the FCT, Mallam Tijani, could not be reached for comments on what actually took place in his school at press time.

Although the school has not been officially closed down, most of the students living on campus, particularly the female ones, fled to the towns or states.

The condition of the shot students could also not be ascertained at press time due to lack of information regarding the various hospitals where they had been taken for treatment.

Contacted, the FCT Commissioner of Police, Lawrence Alobi, told *Sunday Independent* on telephone that he was not aware of the development.

He, however, promised to deploy his men to the school to ascertain the situation and take possible steps to restore peace and order.