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ABUJA

Eight Killed In Army, Shiites' Abuja Clash

The Nigerian army said on Sunday that its troops killed three members of the Islamic Movement of Nige-

ria, popularly called Shiites, who had allegedly attempted to overrun troops' convoy and steal missiles and ammunition.

The Shiites are led by their de-

tained leader, Sheikh Ibrahim El-Zakzaky.

Major General James Myam, Commander, Army Headquarters Garrison, made the confirmation

in a statement issued in Abuja, and expressed regrets that his troops sustained diverse degrees of injuries following the encounter.

General Myam said that troops

of Army Headquarters Garrison were on official duty escorting ammunition and missiles from Abuja

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"There are just certain not be taken for granted that ue encouraging my party to would not give way for them. shows you

Eight Killed In Army, Shiites' Abuja Clash

encounter, three members of the sect were killed while two soldiers sustained various degrees of injuries and are being treated at a military medical facility."

Myam said normalcy had been restored in the general area, requesting members of the public, especially those plying the Abuja - Zuba Road to go about their normal activities with the assurance from the Nigerian army that "no individual or persons would be allowed to disturb public peace and unprovoked attacks against military convoys."

On Sunday, the Shiites said five of their members were killed during a procession. Our correspondent reports that members of the movement on Sunday stormed the nation's capital city from various states about 3:30p.m, wielding flags with Arabic inscriptions.

They had alerted residents of the three-day protest via a statement on Saturday, asking them not to panic.

They surmounted barricades and blockades mounted by the Nigerian army, the police and civil defence, thus

paralysing sections of the city.

The protesters, who came via the Suleja-Kaduna axis, were said to have come from Sokoto, Kano, Katsina, and Kaduna states, among others.

Their numbers on the Abuja-Kubwa-Zuba Expressway reportedly overflowed the service lane of the road, paralysing vehicular movement, and forcing motorists to divert to other routes.

The protesters were said to have trekked the distance from their states, defying the downpour which left them drenched as they chanted 'Free Zakzaky; Free Our Leader'.

The several blockades mounted by the police and soldiers along Suleja-Zuba Expressway, apparently meant to prevent them from gaining entry into Abuja, were serially dismantled by the group.

Having overcome the barricades on Kubwa road, another detachment of armed personnel and soldiers from Guards Brigade was said to have been drafted to Katampe junction with a view to stopping the protesters.

But the group, sensing the reinforcement by the security operatives, decided to terminate their protest at Gwarinpa which is roughly 2 kilometres to the city centre.

Along the Mararaba-Nyanja axis, where members of the group from North East and North Central states made their entry, the situation was different, as the police and Nigerian army refused to allow the group to go beyond Abacha Barracks.

According to eyewitnesses, the operatives reportedly fired gunshots to scare the protesters.

Many motorists were caught up in the mêlée, resulting in heavy gridlock along the area already notorious for its traffic issues.

As at the time of filing this report, the protesters around Gwarinpa and Abacha Barracks had been dispersed and normalcy returned to the area.

The group had on Saturday, at press conference, announced that over one million followers of Sheikh Ibrahim El-Zakzaky would converge on Abuja on Sunday, October

28, to embark on Arbaceen Symbolic Trek to mark the tragic day that Tyrant Yazid bn Mu'awiyah killed Imam Hussain Ibn Ali and his family.

The group claimed that five of their members were allegedly shot to death by the Nigerian army during a violent clash around Zuba in Gwagwalada Area Council of Abuja.

The Spokesperson of the group, Abdullahi Muhammad Musa, said the movement would not be intimidated by the killing of its members.

He added that the movement would not give up its demand for the release of their spiritual leader, Sheikh Ibrahim El-Zakzaky.

"If the security agents are trigger-happy, then they should save their arms and bullets to other parts of the country engulfed in violence, but not on peaceful marchers carrying no arms with them," Musa noted.

He said the protest would continue today, Monday, and end on Tuesday, appealing to the residents of Abuja and environs not to panic.

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