

UPDATED: Three killed as Fed varsity Wukari shuts down over Tiv/Jukun crisis



by **Fanen Ihyongo, Jalingo** July 31, 2019 in **News, News Update**

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The crisis between Tiv and Jukun ethnic groups in Wukari local government area of Taraba State assumed a different dimension as two students and a non-academic staff of the Federal University Wukari were abducted and killed on Wednesday.

The names of two of the deceased were given as: Msughter Vihior Andura (100-level Micro Biology) and Mark Tsav (non- academic staff).

Police spokesman, ASP David Misal, confirmed the abduction of the trio.

“They were abducted at Kasuwan Shanu, near Chonku,” he said.

The authorities of the university closed down the institution following the incident.

The Vice Chancellor of the varsity, Prof. Abubakar Kundiri, told journalists that the slain students and staff, being Tiv, sparked off protest by Tiv students, which was joined by other students.

Kundiri disclosed the abductors had used the mobile phone of the non-academic staff to demand for ransom from the university management.

The protesting students demanded for bodies of the slain persons and relocation of the university.

Tension was high, it was learnt.

A Committee of Deans and Directors, on behalf of the university Senate, approved the suspension of lectures and closure of the institution till further notice.

The committee asked the students to vacate the premises of university.

The vice chancellor said security was beefed up by the army and police to ensure the safe exit of students and staff from Wukari.

The Registrar of the university, Magaji Gangumi, in a statement, said: "the closure became necessary following the killings and protest."

According to him: "The Committee of Deans and Directors of Federal University, Wukari, on behalf of the Senate, has approved the suspension of lectures and closure of the institution till further notice.

"This follows the protest by students over the kidnapping of their mates along Wukari-Katsina Ala highway on Tuesday.

"Students are directed to vacate the hostels and the university premises by or before 12 noon on Wednesday."

The bodies of the slain persons were however recovered after the school had been shut down.

A reliable source said the bodies were found near Jibril Anfani farms, along Wukari-Rafinkada Road.

"A good Fulani man, who was watching the incident, helped the army to recover the bodies," our source said.

Hundreds of lives have been lost and properties, including food stuff, estimated in billions of naira have been destroyed since the crisis started in Kente village on April 1.

Since then, guns have continued to boom, with machetes slashing, as death tolls rise daily.

Homes are being razed and plundered. The scenes of destruction are gory and scary.

Yet travelers are sometimes fetched from vehicles on the highway and massacred as violence rages on.

Thousands in Wukari have fled their homes, which have come under attack as a result of the crisis, turning Wukari into a ghost town.

As such, the university had been in operation amidst fear.

The Tiv-Jukun crisis is one of the protracted inter-ethnic feuds in Nigeria, reverberating in intervals of 10 and 20 years.

The conflict first erupted in 1959. It reoccurred in 1980, 1990, 2001 and 2019.

It was gathered that the major cause of the Jukun/Tiv conflict is the claim by Jukuns that the Tiv are “settlers,” not indigenes, in Wukari, and ipso facto, have no ownership right to the land they occupy.

The Tiv, on the other hand, use the longevity of their stay in Wukari to repel their settler status to claim land ownership and political rights in the area.

These seeming claims, passed on to Jukun/Tiv offsprings, generate bloody scenes.

In the ongoing resurgence, Jukun militants are hacking down Tiv residents to death and burning their homes.

The Tiv militia groups are also balancing the terror, invading Jukun homes, killing them and destroying properties.

Governor Darius Ishaku, who clocked 65 years on Tuesday, devoted the day to prayers, because of the killings.

“How can I be celebrating birthday when my people are being killed?” he asked his aide on Media and Publicity, Bala Dan Abu.

Abu said he had approached Ishaku with a memo seeking his “permission to make arrangements for a befitting celebration in the media” but the governor turned his plan down because of the crisis.

Many had thought Tiv and Jukun will enjoy the best of their interaction these days, owing to the fact that Governor Ishaku, a Jukun, is married to a Tiv.