

# Two shot dead in Taraba soldier-police clash



Victor Gai, Jalingo



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Soldiers and policemen yesterday exchanged gunfire around the office of the Independent Electoral Commission (INEC), where votes in Saturday's governorship election were being collated.

*The Nation* learnt that a policewoman in mufti resuming duty at the INEC yesterday morning was asked to produce her identity card for recognition.

When she failed to cooperate, the soldiers assaulted her.

This attracted the attention of police personnel in the area.

A fracas ensued, leading to exchange of gunfire between both parties.

Teargas was also fired.

Business in the area were shut and people scampered for safety.

A journalist on his way to the collation centre was caught in the fracas.

He told *The Nation* that some party faithful were trying to protest the announced result, which prompted the intervention of security personnel in order to avert the breakdown of law and order.

“Here is no-go area for now. It is like there are mercenaries in town. We are hiding in one of the shops. Everywhere is closed now. There are gunshots and tear gas all over,” the journalist said.

Several police personnel were feared dead while more were injured.

*The Nation* was at the police headquarters in Jalingo to ascertain things. Several vehicles were riddled with bullets and their tyres punctured. Some uniforms were seen with blood stains on them. Also, police personnel, mostly in mufti, were seen discussing the experience.

Some of them said the soldiers raided the premises in armoured vehicles.

“I was at the shop when I heard some scuffle. They started around the INEC office. I was cooking and before I knew it, I heard sporadic shots. I ran and stumbled. I left my cooking. The shooting was too much and I thought that was my end.

“I called home and asked them to pray for me because I was not sure if I would be alive. I pleaded with everyone at home to forgive me if I offended them,” a food seller said.

The police, army and the Department of State Services (DSS) said one police officer died while three other personnel were injured.

In a joint press briefing at the SSS headquarters in Jalingo, the Taraba State Commissioner of Police, Sulaiman Yusuf, narrated what happened.

“The Commander 6th Brigade of the Nigerian Army and the Commissioner of Police, Taraba State command, regret the unfortunate incident that occurred this morning 20th March, 2023 which led to a clash between the personnel of both organisations in Jalingo.

“It was a minor disagreement that led to the escalation of the incident. This incident is a dent in the synergy and mutual trust both the army and the police in Taraba state have enjoyed .

“The high command of both organisations have set up a joint investigation team to look into the root cause of the matter,” Yusuf said.

Contrary to the joint statement, the police Command said two of its personnel were killed by the soldiers, while two others were injured and currently receiving treatment.

The Command’s spokesman, Abdullahi Usman, said the incident occurred at a military checkpoint close to the INEC headquarters in Jalingo and the police command at about 8:30 am.

“The soldiers shot two police personnel and went away with their rifles.

“Some proceeded to the command headquarters with guns and sporadically shot in the air, and one police officer who was going off duty was shot and killed instantly.

“Another who was just reporting for duty and did not even know what was happening was also shot the moment they identified him as a policeman,” Usman said.

“As we speak, we have gotten reports that our men who are escorting election results or on various duties are being stopped at military checkpoints and harassed,” he said.