

Two policemen killed during clash with Islamic group in FCT



- *Three policemen critically injured, 3 patrol vans torched*
- *52 El-Zakzaky's men arrested*

Two policemen were killed and three others critically injured during a clash yesterday between security men and members of the **Islamic Movement of Nigeria** (IMN) otherwise known as Shi'ite, in Abuja.

The Islamic group, led by Ibrahim El-Zakzaky, frequently clashes with security men usually during processions held by the group to celebrate some events on their religious calendar, leading to violence and deaths.

After one such incident, the group was proscribed on July 26, 2019, by the **Muhammadu Buhari** Administration.

According to the police account, the Shi'ites in the procession were armed with various weapons with which they attacked a police checkpoint, burning three vans.

This resulted in exchanges between them and policemen at the popular Julius Berge junction of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT).

But the group contradicted the police, saying their men in the procession did not carry any ammunition and were peaceful.

FCT police commissioner, Benneth Igweh, said 52 members of the group were arrested after the violent confrontation, adding that they would be charged.

He promised that the police would not leave any stone unturned in curbing the activities of the Shi'ites.

The FCT Command spokesman, Josephine Adeh, a Superintendent of Police, gave an account of the attack in a statement.

She said: “Two police officers died, three others are unconscious and receiving treatment at a hospital, and three patrol vehicles were destroyed.

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“The proscribed group attacked the police checkpoint unprovoked.

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“Several arrests have been made, and Benneth Igweh, the Commissioner of Police, has condemned the attack, vowing to bring those responsible to justice.

“The situation is currently under control, and normalcy has been restored to the area.

“For now, the FCT Police Command remains on high alert, closely monitoring the situation to prevent any further outbreaks of violence.”

But the Shi'ite group gave a different picture of what happened.

Its spokesman, Sheikh Sidi Munir Mainasara Sokoto, said in a statement: “We wish to inform the public that police have attacked the ongoing Arba’een Symbolic Trek at Wuse District in Abuja and killed mourners.

“While trying to disperse the Arbaeen Trek, the police killed and injured numerous mourners.

“Presently, security agents are busy arresting the Arbaeen Trek mourners.

“Medical practitioners are attending to those critically injured, and details of those killed, injured, and arrested will be made available to members of the press in due course.

“Before the commencement of the trek, we searched all participants to ensure no infiltration, and the programme will end as scheduled.”

According to him, the Arbeen walk which was staged on Saturday at the Masaka and Zuba axis of the capital city, ended peacefully and successfully.

The IMN, which has its headquarters in Zaria, Kaduna State, is affiliated with the Shi’ite Islamic sect which has its roots in Iran