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NATIONAL NEWS

## 2 die as youth, police clash in Niger

*From BALA B. BITRUS, Minna**Posted: Thursday, April 14, 2011*

HIGHHANDEDNESS and poor sense of duty execution by some Policemen on duty in a village in Mashegu area of Niger state last Monday led to confrontation that resulted in the death of two persons and a tale of violent destruction of properties.

Trouble started when a policeman on duty at a checkpoint had accosted a commercial motor cyclist who was on his way from a neighbouring village. Attempts by the policeman to force the cyclist to stop abruptly resulted in the falling of the rider who slumped and died from the brutal fall.

Angry youth from the area immediately mobilized to launch an offensive against the policeman who on sensing danger attempted to run into safety but was apprehended.

The youth insisted to avenge the death of the cyclist immediately. Their action resulted in some argument and soon a mob action ensued. The youth immediately took to the streets chanting war songs and calling for greater enforcement to vent their anger on the offending Policeman who they wanted dead or alive for killing one of their own.

An informed source told our correspondent that the cyclist had fallen headlong as the Policeman dragged him off his motorcycle while the motorcycle was still on motion as the rider attempted to resist attempt to dodge the policeman.

An eye witness, Malam Umar Mohammed who said he witnessed the event that led to the death of the commercial motorcyclist, said "the Policeman at a checkpoint had dragged the man off his bike as the rider attempted to ride pass the Policeman".

As a result of fall, the cyclist died on the spot and the Policemen at the checkpoint abandoned him as he writhed to death and left the corpse on the ground unattended to.

Our source said some youth in the village who later got wind of the death of the cyclist, ran to the scene and discovered that the policemen were going about their work. This development it was gathered angered them.

The angry youth had quickly mobilized to the checkpoint and launched an offensive on the Policemen at the checkpoint.

The angry youth according to our source had caught the policeman and descended on him and his colleague killing the policeman who caused the death of the commercial motorcyclist. The second policeman was not spared. He was beaten to a state of unconsciousness before any help could reach him.

At the end of the fracas, two corpses laid on the ground even as the angry youth moved into the town to vent their anger before some community leaders called them to order.

The Niger state Police Command's Public Relations Officer Mr. Richard Oguiche confirmed the disturbance at Kaboji village but denied that lives were lost. Oguiche said nobody was killed but confirmed that two policemen were currently receiving treatment in a hospital following assaults by some restive youth at Kaboji village.

He explained that while the Policemen were carrying a wounded cyclist who had an accident to the hospital, some youths were wrongly led into believing that the two Policemen were responsible for the cyclist's injuries. The youth according to Oguiche descended on the policemen.

"The motorcyclist did not die. What happened was that he had an accident and the police picked him up and were rushing him to the hospital but the villagers thought the police was responsible for what happened to him. They injured two Policemen in the process".

The police image maker however revealed that three persons believed to be ring-leaders of the youth that assaulted the policemen on duty have been arrested and were in police custody. He said the three would soon be charged to court.

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